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Tourism in Holmes County and the Ministry of *Behalt*

". . . to live amidst tourism also means dealing with the marketing and selling of Amish and Mennonite cultural distinctives in nearly every imaginable form: from raisin custard pie, to faceless Amish dolls, to buggy refrigerator magnets."
Photo credit: Doyle Yoder, 1998.

By Susan Biesecker-Mast

Introduction

In the spring of 1992, my spouse and I spent a weekend in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, making what was for me my first tour of the area and its communities. At one point during our visit, we sat down on the front porch of a snack shop in Intercourse and from there witnessed what remains for me an unforgettable scene.

A group of adults who looked to be middle-class and middle-aged tourists came out of the shop we'd just been in and walked down the sidewalk leading from the shop to the main street where their minivan was parked. At about the moment they reached their minivan, we could hear an Amish buggy coming down the main street in front of us. Just then one of the women in that group got an idea to get a picture of the buggy. But the buggy was moving pretty fast and by the time the woman had retrieved her camera out of her purse and set her bags down, the buggy was just passing the minivan. Not giving up, the woman took off running down the street with her camera outstretched before her. By her account on return, she got the shot, however blurred, of the back end of that buggy. Ever since that day, I have wondered about that woman chasing after that buggy.

Why would a middle-class, middle-aged woman run down a main street after the back end of an Amish buggy?

This essay is, in part, an attempt to answer that question. But it also seeks to answer a broader question as well. While it would be unwise to generalize directly from that woman's behavior to the behavior of other tourists since most tourists don't run down main streets after buggies, I'm not sure that the more common practices of the millions of tourists every year who seek out the

Amish are unrelated to that woman's rather more zealous attempt. Hence this essay addresses the following question as well: what is middle America seeking in its trips to "Amish Country"? In other words, just what is this tourist attraction? Finally, this essay considers *Behalt* as a response to that tourist attraction and argues that *Behalt* provides three important ministries each of which gives a powerful Christian witness in the context of this tourist attraction.

The Amish and Tourism in Eastern Ohio

I suppose I might have forgotten about that woman chasing the buggy in Lancaster were it not for the fact that that trip to Amish Country was followed by countless more to Holmes County. Over the course of those trips I have come to wonder about another curious phenomenon related to tourism, namely, the difference between Amish life and the tourist trade.

I have come to understand the Amish to be a people of vigilance who insist on being of the kingdom of God, rather than of the kingdom of the world. This insistence becomes evident as they choose plain dress, refuse electrical power service, continue the use of Pennsylvania Dutch, keep the telephone out of the house, submit the will of the individual to the authority of the body of believers, depend on the use of horse and buggy for regular transportation, convene church worship services in private dwellings or barns, and encourage farming as the primary family occupation. Thus, their collective practices constitute a religious community that is visible, simple, earthy, local, communalistic, slow, quiet, and rural. In a word, different—from middle American culture.

Tourist sites in Holmes and Tuscarawas counties pose a sharp contrast to the life of the Amish. Whereas Amish farms are relatively unadorned, modest in size, and highly functional; the shops, restaurants, and hotels in area tourist towns are often elaborately decorated, sometimes grandiose, and often themed. Sugarcreek calls itself "Little Switzerland" and has developed from the ancestry of some of its inhabitants the look of a Swiss village nestled in a valley of the Alps. Berlin now features rustic Western-style stores that constitute a frontier theme. Walnut Creek with its Carlisle House Gifts and Carlisle Inn clearly offers a Victorian setting. Upon entering these impressive establishments, what we find are grand entrances, luxurious furnishings, and inviting displays. These inns, restaurants, and stores are built and decorated with tremendous skill. And the shops are generously stocked with fine china tea sets, scented candles, delicious chocolates, Asian rugs, lace dresses, gourmet coffees, and imported German Christmas ornaments. To sum up the contrast, then, these popular tourist destinations in Amish Country are decidedly non-Amish.

What are we to make of this sharp contrast? We could conclude that the primary connection these tourist attractions have to the Amish is proximity. Or, worse, we could say that these tourist attractions built on middle American curiosity about the Amish actually constitute an obstacle to that very curiosity. Donald Kraybill, sociologist and author of numerous books on Amish culture and life, argues that tourist sites do function as obstacles or "buffer zones," but that in doing so they are not simply problematic. Rather, as buffer zones or barriers to Amish life, tourist sites restrict the movement of tourists and, thereby, protect Amish communities from a total infiltration by millions of tourists who would surely undo Amish life.[1]

In addition to protecting Amish from tourists, tourist sites also serve an important function for tourists. According to Kraybill, by limiting access to Amish, tourist sites preserve the difference of the Amish and, thereby, the "authenticity" that the tourists seek. Finally, Kraybill argues, smart tourists do not fail to recognize this function: "Discerning tourists realize that they are being duped—that the representations of Amish life are not authentic, but merely front stage replicas. Thus the mystique of the backstage lingers."[2]

If Kraybill is right, then tourism's buffer zone may serve at least one

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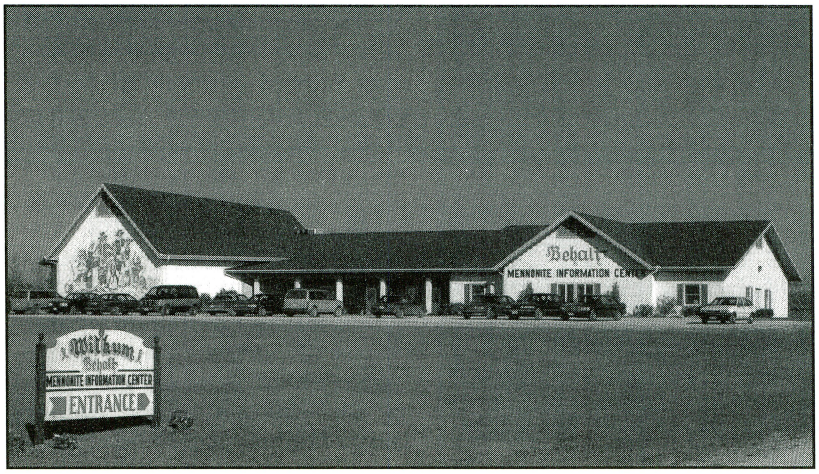


". . . as buffer zones or barriers to Amish life, tourist sites restrict the movement of tourists and, thereby, protect Amish communities from a total infiltration by millions of tourists who would surely undo Amish life." Mennonite Information Center, Berlin, Ohio, offers guided tours, a video presentation on local Amish and Mennonite life, and a cyclorama.
Photo credit: Doyle Yoder, 1993.

other function as well. Perhaps by obstructing middle America's access to the difference or otherness of the Amish, tourism also reassures middle Americans that it is still possible to be otherwise in an America in which entirely too many of us sport the same brand of athletic shoe, thirst for only one of two different colas, and yearn for a sport utility vehicle. That is, perhaps tourism's buffer provides material encouragement for the idea that, after all, to be middle American is still some kind of choice.

I think Kraybill is right that the tourist industry functions this way. That is, even as it purports to provide access to the Amish, one of its primary functions is, in fact, to deny such access. But I also think that tourists do gain some significant access to Amish. That this is so seems clear in the disruptions in Amish life that tourism brings.

To live as an Amish person (or as plain dressing Mennonite) amidst tourism in Holmes County is to endure persistent surveillance. It means one is watched, questioned, and photographed. Just two decades ago such surveillance was a feature of daily life only during the summer and early fall months. Today it is a part of life nearly all year round. Further, to live amidst tourism also means dealing with the marketing and selling of Amish and Mennonite cultural distinctives in nearly every imaginable form: from raisin custard pie, to faceless Amish dolls, to buggy refrigerator magnets. Over the years, as the number of tourists has grown to something like four million per year, Mennonites and Amish have had to struggle with the impact of tourism on all facets of their religious and community life.

All this is to say that while tourism largely denies tourists access to the object of their attraction, it also allows for some significant interaction. To be sure, however, even when tourism allows for or enables some interaction it always mediates the encounter. In order to specify the significant and perhaps even positive interaction that is a part of this tourist attraction, I need first to say a bit about the context out of which these tourists come.

Consumer/Technology Culture and Tourism

Over the last twenty years an incredible transformation has occurred in American culture. American culture has become a digital culture capable of moving information from one side of the globe to the other in no time. Some of the markers of this digital revolution include e-mail, voice mail, cable TV, the world wide web, pagers, cellular phones, electronic trade, compact discs, and, of course, the personal computer. These are just some of the technologies that the digital revolution has brought us. But what do these technologies mean for middle America's daily life? They mean that at work people spend less time talking to their colleagues and more time looking into their computer screens. They mean that people are digitally accessible almost all of the time whether by e-mail, voice mail, answering machine, cellular phone, or pager. They mean that we increasingly see people talking on cellular phones while having dinner at a restaurant or walking through a park. They mean that most middle Americans choose to entertain themselves by watching television, playing a video game, or surfing the web. They mean that we can buy and sell stocks 24 hours a day.

Obviously there is much we could say about these technologies and about the habits and practices they make possible. We could talk about how these new technologies increase the speed of life, or cause information overload, or suck up our disposable income. But what I would like to talk about is perhaps the most basic feature of this digital culture—the fact that it is structured by mediation. By that I mean that human contact or communication is more and more mediated, less and less face to face. While we can talk to one another more often and from more locations, we must do so through a cellular phone which, by the way, interrupts the conversation we might have just been having across the table from our dinner partner. While we can enjoy graphically sophisticated movies without leaving the house any night of the week, we spend more time looking at the tube than looking at our children. While we can listen to classical music with perfect sound quality

Section Fifteen of "Behalt," a 256 foot cyclorama depicting Amish, Hutterite and Mennonite history, by Heinz Gaugel at the Mennonite Information Center, Berlin, Ohio. This part of "Behalt" depicts a barnraising, Peter and Elfrieda Dyck's 1945 rescue of 5000 Mennonites from Berlin, Germany, and the ship, "Volendam," which carried them to South America; the 1962 murder of Merlin Grove in Somalia; the 1962 capture of Daniel Gerber at the Banmethout Leprosarium in Vietnam; the 1968 murder of Ruth Wilting in Vietnam; an Amish funeral and wedding; Amish, Hutterites, Conversative Mennonites and Mennonites at worship; the founding of Rosedale Bible Institute, Ohio, and Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario—both in 1961.

from our entertainment centers, we have more difficulty appreciating why we should venture out to a concert. This digital revolution, I am arguing, is about the insertion of technology between human beings. It promises connectivity but delivers instead a profound disconnect from family, from neighbor, from community, from our fellow human being.

In addition to this digital revolution, the last twenty years have also transformed America into a culture that is saturated by commercial messages. On average, most Americans see 1500 advertisements a day. Of course, we see these advertisements in the "usual" places—on television, in magazines, in newspapers, on web pages, and on billboards. More and more, however, we also see them in "unusual" places like the floors of supermarkets, much of our clothing, the back of grocery or ATM receipts, and even on the sides of school buses. We are a culture drenched in commercial messages. Although we do not pay attention to all of these messages, we do still live with their effects. To live every day in an environment of commercial messages is to become accustomed to being positioned as a consumer first—as one who needs to buy. Even more importantly, to live in an environment of commercial messages is to be ourselves bought and sold throughout the day.

A brief example will make my point more clear. In a radio news report a day or two prior to last year's Super Bowl game, a journalist was interviewing an advertiser about the phenomenal cost of one-minute commercial spots during the game. For the right just to air the commercial (not to produce it) advertisers paid one million dollars. When the journalist exclaimed about that price, the advertiser pointed out that with that one million dollars, he could reach 15 million pairs of eyeballs. "One million bucks for 15 million pairs of eyeballs," he said, "is not a bad price." It is not time the advertisers are buying or space, it is eyeballs. It is us they are buying.

In sum, then, what I am arguing is that over the last twenty years our context has changed rather dramatically. As our culture has become more focused on consumption, the efforts of the advertising industry have transformed us into the primary commodity that is bought and sold. From the perspective of that consumer culture, we are less human beings than market commodities. Further, as we have moved through the digital revolution, being humanly connected has been replaced by being "plugged in." Thus we increasingly give over face-to-face interaction to technologically mediated communication.

That Woman and the Buggy

I want to return to that woman and the buggy and propose an answer to the question I raised at the outset of this presentation: namely, why would that woman chase the back end of a buggy down main street? To answer that question, I turn to an appeal made by an image of tourism in Holmes County—namely, a sign that used to hang above a shop called "Amish Collection" in Berlin, the center of tourism in Holmes County.

The sign was a huge plywood cutout painted to look like the back end of a buggy. From the view offered by the sign, you could see in the background silhouettes of what looked like the backs of two Amish adults, presumably a mother and father, and in the foreground full color images of presumably their two Amish children. The wheels that stuck out of the sign suggested that we should see the buggy as if it were moving down the street in front of us. Notably, the children were sitting securely inside the back of the buggy with their parents in the driver's seat. The children were painted as watching us and smiling at us.

Thus they were figured by the sign as both well within Amish culture but also fully capable of expressing pleasure toward the outer world. In this sense they were

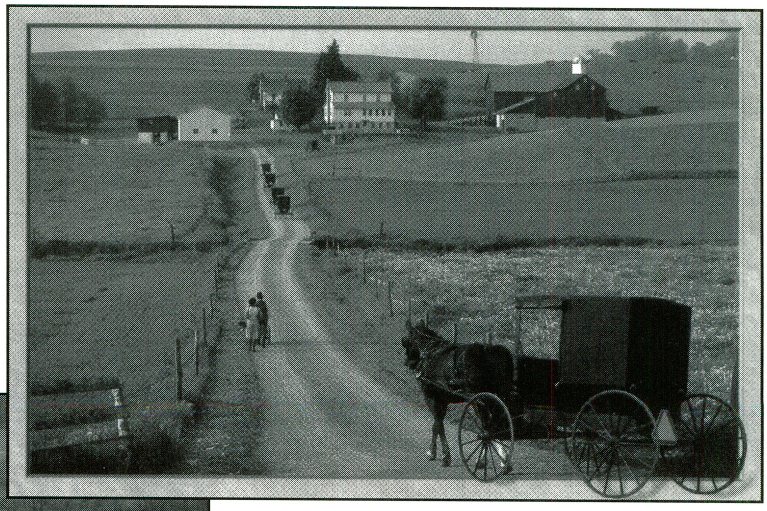
both inside and out of Amish life. Indeed, perhaps like real Amish children who live in the church but have not joined it, these painted children were complex for us. They were not simply fully Amish (just as Amish children are not fully Amish prior to their decision of membership) and certainly not simply middle American (as they were clearly being raised Amish). They were somewhere in between. And, again, they were looking at us. Thus, in an important reversal of the relationship of the middle American tourist to the Amish "spectacle," it is the tourist that is being watched. In an important reversal of the typical relationship in tourism between "native" and tourist, the tourist is the object of the "native's" gaze.

How, as we look at this sign, are we constituted by their gaze? Who are we as they look upon us? In the instance of this sign and since they are smiling at us, we appear to be the source of some pleasure. Importantly, I think their pleasure gives us a certain delight. Indeed, judging from the many tourists I have seen stop to take a picture of this sign, I think we enjoy their smile quite a bit. So, what is the nature of our delight in their apparent pleasure from us?

I have been arguing that our culture constitutes middle Americans as commodities—as items to be bought or sold—who spend increasing amounts of time engaged in technologically mediated communication. I have also suggested that Amish children occupy a unique place in our culture as persons who are neither fully Amish nor certainly middle American. As such, I think, they represent for middle Americans a unique instance of humanity that still has the capacity for meaningful choice. The Amish child lives in between worlds, fully expected to choose either to live in "the world," a world of intensifying consumption and technological mediation, or in the Amish church, a community characterized by simplicity and face-to-face interaction. This is a choice that the middle American child is trained never to see. Indeed, our commercial culture is dedicated to making sure that before the middle American child ever reaches adolescence, he or she will not be able to imagine life without consumption and technology. Perhaps in this context, then, we enjoy this sign insofar as we delight in the pleasure that these as yet unthoroughly-mediated, un-thoroughly-commodified human beings seem to take in us. Perhaps when they smile at us we become de-commodified and re-connected.

Of course, this was only an image of Amish children painted on plywood. But what if there were a real buggy going down the street? What if, as is often the case, there were children sitting in the back of that buggy? Might they look through the small window or peer out from the open door? If so, might they smile at us? Or would they seem indifferent?

As I have thought about this sign, I have wondered whether that woman in Lancaster wasn't so much chasing the back end of a buggy as she was seeking an answer to questions such as these. Whatever the case, I don't think tourism simply functions as a buffer, although it certainly does do that. Indeed, without that buffer,



Above: Tourists can purchase postcards like this one, which offers the following explanation: "Sunday mornings, families from the local church district as well as other friends, and neighbors gather at a member's home for church services. On warm days these services are held in the top of the barn."
Photo Credit: Doyle Yoder, 1999.

Left: "Amish Country" postcard, with the following caption: "Amish parents want their children to follow in their footsteps, though maybe not as literally as these youngsters following their father, doing his spring plowing."
Photo Credit: Doyle Yoder, 1991.

the Amish child may have already become the middle American child. I think tourism does hold out the promise, however small, of a human communicative interaction (even if it is as brief and small as a child's smile) that has the capacity to transform the Amish from the object of surveillance to the subject of the gaze and to transform middle Americans from human commodities back into human beings. The possibility of these transformations, I am suggesting, is at the root of the tourist attraction.

The Ministry of *Behalt* Amidst Tourism

If it is true that this tourist attraction has something to do with the search for human communicative interaction and a reconstitution of both Amish and middle Americans as human beings not spectacles or commodities, then I think that our Mennonite information centers, in general, and *Behalt*, in particular, perform three crucial ministries.

The first is the ministry of hospitality. By this ministry tourists are transformed into visitors whose questions, whether silly or provocative, are received as worthy of response. By this ministry too, these visitors are invited to enter into one of our most precious possessions—our story and our heritage. Importantly, they are brought to the story through face-to-face communication—that is, by storytellers from our communities who, as they tell the story over and over in all its intricate detail become authorities in matters of history and faith for the tourist. Although the visitor does see an introductory video at *Behalt*, the story that is at the core of who we are, the story that makes sense of our convictions and our practices, is not conveyed by recording device but, rather, is always told in the here and now and presence of a member of the community.

The second is perhaps easily missed and that is the ministry of inquiry. *Behalt* does not offer as do the vast majority of museums, a gift shop. When you exit the tour you do not enter a place in which you can purchase all manner of souvenirs. Instead, you are sent out into the lobby. From there you might exit the building, which many people do. Or you might visit with one of the hosts. Or you might, if you are really interested in the possibility of a purchase, browse the bookstore. There, again, you will not be bombarded with trinkets but, rather, will come to shelves and shelves of books on Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites, etc. Importantly, then, this is not a gift shop that offers you some memento by which to remember your visit to Amish Country. Instead this is a resource room that invites you to pursue your curiosity.

Finally, third, I think *Behalt* provides a ministry of witness toward the possibility of transgressing digital and consumer culture. When we make the slow trip around the periphery of the huge octagonal room upon whose walls a mural depicting the struggle of our heritage is hung, our perspective shifts so that we glimpse the possibility of becoming otherwise. As we move around, the storyteller directs our gaze from one image to the next and tells us a story of the radicals of the reformation, the martyrs of the faith, the emigrants to religious freedom, the builders of our institutions, the witnesses to peace, and ultimately, of the global church. Through all of these images we cannot help but notice the complexity of our story of faith and in culture—the theological debates and discipleship struggles that constitute so much of what it has always meant to live as Amish or Mennonite.

Importantly, no tourist or local visitor can see the whole painting in one glance. No one can look upon it as a single thing. Indeed it is difficult even to see just one image, to hold just one figure in one's mind, as its image slips into another. In addition, to see the painting requires moving along the periphery of the room with one's back to the center and one's gaze turned outward. Thus, to see the whole painting, is to be put on the move, to pass through, as it were, the origins and the stories, the images and the voices that constitute a cacophony of struggles and triumphs, screams and prayers that are the Anabaptist stories. And as visitors complete the circle, as they make their way from Jesus through the martyrs to the immigrants and back again they are invited to allow their visit to become an experience of transformation. That is, they are invited to join or recommit themselves to an Anabaptist vision that is also a global church.

As you may know, "*Behalt*" means to hold onto or to remember. But even as this mural and its ministry do oblige us to remember that story and, in that sense, to hold onto it, it also only exists and functions insofar as we give it away in each of its tellings to those who pass through. Thus, I believe, *Behalt* is perhaps less a holding onto than it is a remembering that is done through a telling and that is, therefore, a gift. But it is not a gift of the sort a tourist might pick up in a gift shop. Indeed, it cannot be consumed. It is not a gift to be possessed but instead it can only be embraced if, as the tourist passes beneath the global church and Jesus' outstretched arms, they are transformed and, thereby, enter the story themselves.[3]

—Susan Biesecker-Mast teaches communication at Bluffton College, and is a member at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

Notes

1. Donald Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 228-229.
2. Kraybill 230.
3. For a more developed version of this interpretation of the mural as well as a history of *Behalt*, see my "Behalt: A Rhetoric of Rememberance and Transformation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73 (1999): 601-614.

Nebraska Amish Settlement Revisited

Photos and text by John E. Sharp

The windmill is a lone sentinel of an extinct Old Order Amish settlement in Gosper County, Nebraska. It turns in the wind on the former property of Bishop Yost H. Yoder, whose sudden death in 1901 closed the door on this 24-year dream to establish a church "without spot or wrinkle" on the Great Plains.

The first settlers, in 1880, were nine Yoder families from Juniata County, Pennsylvania, led by Bishop Yost H. Yoder (1843-1901). Others came and some left, but the settlement never grew much larger than a dozen families. There were years of sufficient rainfall and good harvests, but drought and a depressed economy had a devastating effect on the transplanted Pennsylvania farmers. Eventually, by 1904, all the families had scattered to various other settlements, including Mifflin County, Pennsylvania.

I visited there, camera in hand, in September 1999. The homesteads of the Amish were gone. In their place were acres of lush irrigated corn. Corn like this grew only in the hopes and dreams of the former Amish farmers. The only structure left to mark a homestead was the windmill. The cemetery was well hidden by the tall corn and weeds, though it was marked by a weathered wooden sign. The sign had been crafted by a boy from a neighboring farm who earned his Eagle Boy Scout award by caring for the cemetery. Now the half dozen gravestones were nearly lost in the uncut grass.

Yoder Cemetery. Teenager Ron Renken made this sign and cared for the cemetery to earn his Eagle Scout Award. The sign originally said "Yoder Mennonite Cemetery," based on the deed which identified the plot as belonging to Amish Mennonites. Renken assumed Mennonite would be the proper designation. After a visiting Amishman objected, Renken removed "Mennonite." Until recently a youth group from the Hope Lutheran Church sometimes helped Renken mow the grass.

The windmill on the homestead of Bishop Yost H. Yoder

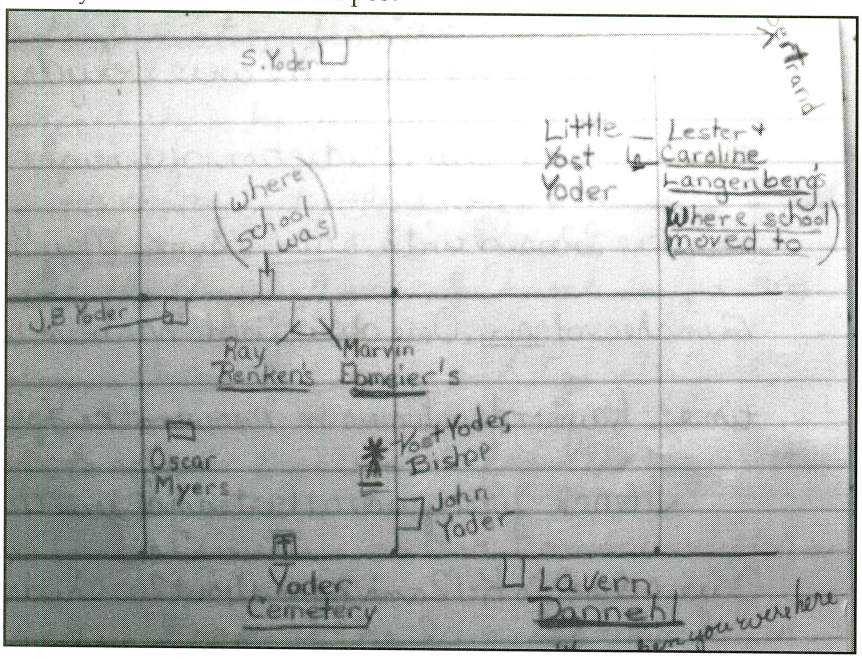
I found the gravestone of Bishop Yost H. Yoder. I remembered that it was he for whom the "Nebraska Amish" in my home community in the Kishacoquillas Valley of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, had been named. In 1881 Yoder had been called there to help organize a dissenting Old Order group. Because Yoder was living in Nebraska at the time, the group was nicknamed the "Nebraska Amish," a name still used to designate this most traditional of all Old Order Amish groups.

I wondered whether anyone in the neighborhood still remembered that this Amish settlement had existed. I was pleasantly surprised to discover neighbors who did, indeed, remember. I found Janet Renken, a schoolteacher, and mother of the Boy Scout caretaker, who has a deep interest in this community's history. From her files she retrieved a hand-drawn map of the former Amish landowners located within the square mile that she and her husband owned and farmed. She had newspaper accounts of the Amish settlement and the names of various Amish families from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, who had visited the cemetery in recent years. They usually left a bit of money for

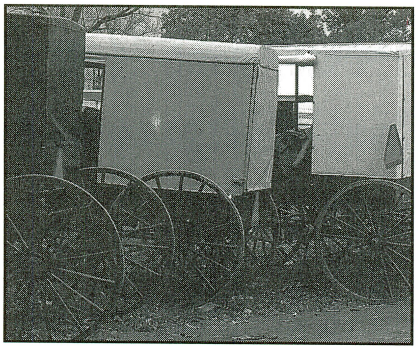
The gravestone of Bishop Yost H. Yoder, born on Christmas Day, 1842, in Juniata County, the son of Michael and Barbara (Hoffman) Yoder. He died unexpectedly December 11, 1901.

the upkeep of the cemetery. She directed me to another neighbor, Caroline Langenberg, who had also, on occasion, received Pennsylvania pilgrims, looking for the cemetery of their ancestors. And I recognized the names, some of whom had been my neighbors in the Kishacoquillas Valley. Behind Caroline's house stood a schoolhouse that had been used by the Amish, and since had been moved to her farm to shelter, not scholars, but farm tools.

I drank coffee in Bertrand, the little village of 300 across the Phelps County line. Bertrand was the post office that served the Amish after the coming of the railroad. I thought of Abe Yoder Sr., a neighbor and friend of my grandfather, who wrote about growing up in this south central Nebraska settlement. He wrote about their sod house, prairie fires, the dry years, the good years, the grasshoppers, leaving home, riding the train to Mifflin County where he married and raised his family, and his later visit with former neighbors in Gosper County. They were all good years, even the tough times. But then, Abe Yoder would think so. I remember him as congenial and optimistic. He would admit that the settlement failed, but I doubt he would think of it as futile. Of course, they had discovered some spots and wrinkles of their own. Perhaps the most contentious wrinkle was the marriage of two young people despite the disapproval of the bride's parents. This flaunting of the parents' authority and the resulting dissension was more than the small community could bear. At least that's how one descendant of the disapproving parents remembered it. But then, Abe Yoder, would be the first to say that the Gosper County settlement was not unique in discovering its spots and wrinkles. Nor is this the only short-lived settlement, as David Luthy makes apparent in his volume on extinct Amish communities.



Janet Renken's hand-drawn map of the former homesteads of the Amish settlers.



White-top buggies and more conservative dress are distinguishing features of the "Nebraska Amish" of central Pennsylvania.

Despite the demise of this settlement, I'm sure Abe Yoder, who died in 1968, would be well pleased to know that the rather tenacious Amish impulse to create visible spiritual communities continues in many places beyond Gosper County, Nebraska.

—John E. Sharp has been editor of the Mennonite Historical Bulletin *and director of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church since 1995.*

For more on this settlement see:

Hostetler, John A., "The Amish in Gosper County, Nebraska," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, October 1949, pp. 1-2.

Kauffman, S. Duane, *Mifflin County Amish and Mennonite Story, 1791-1991* (Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society, 1991) pp. 157-159.

Luthy, David, *The Amish in America: Settlements That Failed* (Aylmer, Ont., and LaGrange, Ind., 1986), pp. 271-276.

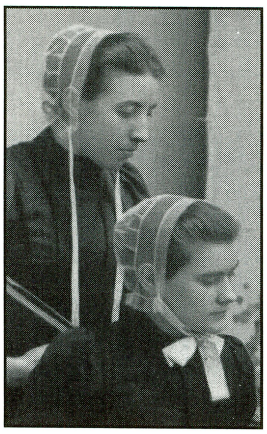
Yoder, Abraham S. Sr., *My Life Story*, 1963, reprinted 1999. Available from Abraham S. Yoder Jr., Belleville, PA 17004.

I Wish I'd Been There

Readers respond to the question: What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and Why?

I Wish I'd Been There: Resisting a Sacred Symbol

By Julia Kasdorf



One Sunday morning during the 1930s, two young church members walked into Maple Grove Amish Mennonite Church in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, with nothing on their heads. The night before, they had hatched the daring plan together and vowed not to lose their nerve, although they expected discipline.

When asked why she did it, one of them told me, "I didn't want to be plain. I never was a plain Mennonite, and I am not now." She wished to be nameless for an interview I conducted while researching the life and work of J. W. Yoder (1872-1956), but she explained her position. In 1928 about to graduate from Belleville High School, she was told to wear either a net cap or black bonnet to the baccalaureate ceremony. At first, she couldn't decide whether to stay home or to comply with the church rule. As a child, she had often heard her mother and J. W. Yoder denounce the head covering as "unbiblical" during Sunday dinners. Amish-born Yoder—a long-time member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and briefly a professor at both Elkhart Institute and the progressive, "old Goshen"—regarded the head covering as an un-Christlike "subordination veil" and saw no reason to retain a relic from Semitic antiquity. In the end, the girl resentfully wore a borrowed bonnet to march with her classmates in mortarboards.

Years later, she clipped a *Gospel Herald* article denouncing the covering on biblical grounds, and pasted it inside her Bible. Around that time—the late 1960s or early 1970s—she and three others were the first to quit wearing coverings at Maple Grove. But I wish I'd been there the first time she tried, because I admired the way she placed her body in line with her beliefs, following the strong tradition of our Anabaptist mothers. Also in their spirit, she did not make that impossible stance of resistance alone, and eventually she did see the rules change.

—Julia Kasdorf is author of two collections of poetry, Sleeping Preacher *and* Eve's Striptease, *and a forthcoming collection of essays,* The Body and the Book: Writing from a Mennonite Life. *She teaches English at Messiah College and worships at St. Stephen's Cathedral Church (Episcopal) in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.*

I Wish I'd Been There: A Professor in Underwear

By Peter J. Dyck

I wish I had been at the Moscow Central Railway Station when Professor Alvin Miller from Ohio arrived there in his underwear.

The year was 1920. The First World War, the Revolution, and the Civil War in Russia were over. Now famine stalked the land, killing men, women, and children. The *New York Times* reported that people in Russia "are dying like flies." The 120,000 Mennonites in their colonies were not exempt. I, too, was expected to die soon as is evidenced by my father's entry in his diary that says, "Little Peter won't be with us much longer."

Meanwhile a delegation of three men had been dispatched to America to tell the sad story. Paul's statement that "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him" (Romans 8:28) was about to be realized. American Mennonites met on July 27 in Elkhart, Indiana, and organized the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for the sole purpose of bringing food to the starving Mennonites, and others, in Russia. Alvin Miller was to be their envoy.

Miller left Paris by train expect-

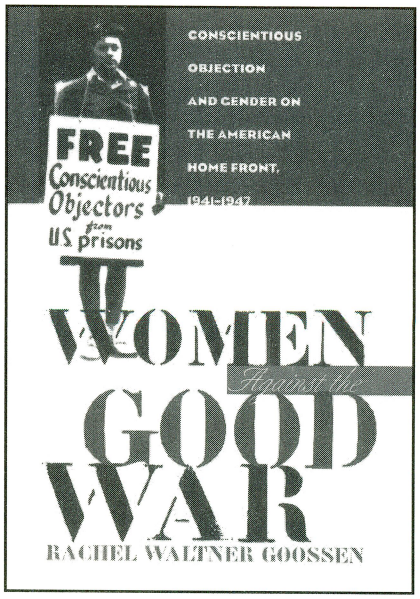
Alvin J. Miller, third from right, front row: He knew how to give, because he had received.

ing to arrive in Moscow the next day. When night came he undressed, down to his long one-piece white underwear, hung his clothing on a hook, and went to sleep. When the conductor called out "Next station Moscow," Alvin awoke with a start, reached for his clothing, and discovered that it was gone. Everything, including his shoes, had been stolen. It was cold outside and there was snow on the ground.

Meanwhile a delegation of Mennonites had come from the Ukraine to meet the first American relief worker and was waiting for him in the central station. There was no Alvin Miller. Finally, they thought he might have taken a "droshke," a horse-drawn taxi, to the hotel. They went outside. What they saw in the first dawn of the early morning was an incredibly strange sight, something like a snowman or a ghost, darting this way and that between the carriages. They investigated this unusual phenomenon, introduced themselves to Alvin Miller, got some clothing for the poor American professor—and the rest is history. Except to say that Alvin Miller had learned the first lesson in relief work: only after you have received, will you know how to give.

—Peter J. Dyck, at home in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, is well known as a storyteller and advocate of Mennonite Central Committee.
Peter J. Dyck was born in Russia, moved to Canada with his parents at age 12, and graduated from Goshen College and Bethany Theological Seminary. Peter is now in active retirement in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and with Elfrieda attends the Kingview Mennonite Church.

Book Review



Women Against the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Home Front, 1941-1947 by Rachel Waltner Goossen. University of North Carolina Press, 1997. 131 pages plus endnotes and bibliography.

Reviewed by Kimberly Schmidt

When future historians of Mennonites study the historiography of the 20th century, what will they conclude? Of course, this type of conjecture is impossible to answer, but no doubt Rachel Waltner Goossen's book on women's experiences in Civilian Public Service will stand out as a fresh and distinctive approach to the telling of Mennonite history. Goossen's emphasis on the female story and on social history methodologies is still new in Mennonite historical circles. She, along with a few other historians, is just beginning to scratch the surface of

Anabaptist and Mennonite women's history.

Goossen aptly employs social history methodologies. Her use of interviews, questionnaires, letters, diaries, photographs, and other archival resources produces a complex and tightly woven narrative about Mennonite, Quaker, Brethren women, and others who, because of religious beliefs and humanitarian convictions, objected to World War II.

We learn about Edna Ramseyer, a college professor when World War II started. She encouraged young women at Goshen College to train themselves for work at CPS camps. Many such women, known as C.O. Girls or COGs, completed the training and went on to work and live in CPS camps.

We also learn about wives and sweethearts of C.O. men. Many of these women followed their husbands when they were transferred from camp to camp. Their stories are about providing for and raising small children on their own while their husbands were contained in the camp setting. Many women, even those with small children, had to become wage earners because government compensation for CPS men was greatly reduced from the amount allotted to men in the armed services. Taking care of children and maintaining households on negligible incomes were common memories in Goossen's account.

But Goossen's story is not just about how women contributed to CPS camps, supported their husbands, sweethearts, and brothers, and "made do" on limited incomes. Her "cultures of nonconformity" analysis is interwoven with a gendered critique of both American culture and church structures. Nonconformist C.O. women challenged both church and societal prescriptions about proper feminine behavior.

C.O. women were nonconformists in the larger American culture because they advocated a pacifist stance instead of wholeheartedly supporting the war. They were also nonconformists in church circles. Many C.O. women wanted to substantially contribute to the work of the church and to CPS camps and yet church administrators were more interested in employing women to boost the morale of men in the camps. Their work was not taken seriously by the church. In terms of training women for work in the camps there was an emphasis on nursing and nutrition, areas considered suitable for women. At a time when women were stepping in to fill men's vacated places on farms and in factories, and as a result truly redefining women's work, it seems that church leaders were mainly interested in tapping women's work but only if they remained safely within a female sphere. World War II did not produce a Mennonite equivalent of Rosie the Riveter, at least not among C.O. women.

As with many good histories some questions remain unanswered. Goossen claims that the CPS experience was transformative for women. We hear from interview material how crucial the experience was, but it is unclear how being a CPS woman made a long-term difference. Did the CPS experience produce female leaders in our church? One wonders, for example, if CPS women were more likely to pursue work outside the home after the war. How many of the women that Goossen questioned had professional careers? Or were CPS women, like the population as a whole, eager to raise families and become homemakers after the war? This is not a criticism of the decision to stay at home with small children. It is simply a question about how far the culture of nonconformity was carried. It seems that the CPS women's nonconformity did not include a sustained challenge to gender role expectations. In a similar vein, Goossen says that the CPS experience caused women to form lifelong commitments to numerous peace and social justice movements but few examples of such commitments were offered.

One also wonders about the day-to-day lives of the women with small children who had to work outside the home. How did they manage far away from home communities, without the help of extended families, and on small incomes? One CPS mother noted how she set up housekeeping in a "New Hampshire CCC barracks with snow sifting across our bed during the winter" (p. 60). The culpability of church administrators who expected female support for CPS men but did not lend aid to CPS wives and children is mentioned but remains largely unexplored.

Goossen also mentions how female support networks flourished around many of the camps. Did a women's culture evolve in these situations? It seems so because often help was found in the oddest of places. Especially intriguing was the story about the women who helped each other even when one's husband was a CPSer and the other's was in the armed services (p. 47). These practical women set aside ideology in order to help one another. The hints of more of these stories were tantalizing and perhaps Goossen has the material and resources to pursue this "women's culture" topic in more detail. This research agenda and similar topics will surely be addressed at greater length as Goossen and others continue to devote themselves to the discovery and analysis of women in history.

—Kimberly D. Schmidt is assistant professor of history, Washington Study-Service Year, Eastern Mennonite University, and a member of Hyattsville Mennonite Church.

Directory of Mennonite and Related Church Historians and Committees

Allegheny Conference Historical Committee, Mark Moyer, 1000 Vista Dr Apt 922, Davidsville, PA 15928, 814 288-4575; Archives at PO Box 12, Somerset, PA 15501

Archives of Evangelical Mennonite Conference, PO Box 1268, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0

Atlantic Coast Conference Historian, Margaret Derstine, 2001 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601, 717 390-4116

Bluffton College Archives, Paul L. Weaver, 280 W College Ave, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-3286, Fax: 419 358-3384, E-mail: weaverp@bluffton.edu

Brethren in Christ Historical Society, E. Morris Sider, Archives of Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027, 717 691-6048, Fax: 717 691-6042

California Mennonite Historical Society, Peter J. Klassen, 4824 E Butler, Fresno, CA 93727, 209 453-2225, E-mail: kennsrem@fresno.edu

Casselman River Area Historians, David I. Miller, PO Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536, 301 895-4488

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1717 S Chestnut Ave, Fresno, CA 93702, 209 453-2225, Fax: 209 453-2124, E-mail: kennsrem@fresno.edu, Web site: http://www.fresno.edu/affiliation/cmbs

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 400 S Jefferson, Hillsboro, KS 67063

Central District Conference Historical Committee, David Habegger, 6929 Hillsboro Ct, Fort Wayne, IN 46835, 219 486-4291, E-mail: DLHabegger@aol.com

Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, Henry D. Goerzen, Box 7, Site 18, RR 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0, 403 335-8414, E-mail: justpen@csdivision.com

Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia Archives, 303-32025 Dahlstrom Ave, Clearbrook, BC V2T 2K7, 604 850-6658, Fax: 604 850-9372, E-mail: cminbc@uniserve.com

Conference of Mennonites in Canada Heritage Committee, Alf Redekopp, interim director, Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, Fax: 204 831-5675, E-mail: redekopp@mennonitechurch.ca, Web site: http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mhc/

Conservative Mennonite Conference Historical Committee, Elmer S. Yoder, 1136 S Prospect Ave, Hartville, OH 44632-8708, 330 877-9566

Delaware Mennonite Historical Association, PO Box 238, Greenwood, DE 19950

Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association, 31 Pickwick Dr, Leamington, ON N8H 4T5, 519 322-0456, E-mail: freebru@wincom.net

Freeman Academy Heritage Archives, Rachel Senner, Cleon Graber, 748 S Main St, PO Box 1000, Freeman, SD 57209, 605 925-4237

General Conference Mennonite Church, John Thiesen, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117, 316 283-2500, E-mail: jthiesen@bethelks.edu

Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust, Galen Horst-Martz, 6133 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19144, 215 843-0943, Fax: 215 843-6263, E-mail: gmht@aol.com

Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society, Delbert Plett, PO Box 1960, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0, 204 326-6454

Hans Herr House Museum, Douglas J. Nyce, 1849 Hans Herr Dr, Willow Street, PA 17584, 717 464-4438, Web site: http://www.hansherr.org

Heritage Historical Library, David Luthy, 52445 Glencolin Line, RR 4, Aylmer, ON N5H 2R3

Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church, John E. Sharp, 1700 S Main St, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7477, Fax: 219 535-7756, E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu, Web site: http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives

Howard-Miami Counties Heritage Society Inc., PO Box 156, Greentown, IN 46936, 765 628-2280

Illinois Amish Interpretive Center, Theresa Binion, 111 S Locust St, PO Box 413, Arcola, IL 61910, 217 268-3599, 888 45AMISH

Illinois Mennonite Conference Historical Committee, Edwin J. Stalter, PO Box 576, Flanagan, IL 61740-0576, 815 796-2918

Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society and Illinois Conference Historian, Edwin J. Stalter, Mennonite Heritage Center, PO Box 1007, Metamora, IL 61548, 309 266-6974 or 815 796-2918

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Iowa-Nebraska Mennonite Conference Historian, Barbara Troyer, 1001 8th Ave, Wellman, IA 52356, 319 646-2151

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Juniata Mennonite Historical Society, Noah L. Zimmerman, The Historical Center, HCR 63, Richfield, PA 17086, 717 694-3543

Kauffman Museum, Rachel Pannabecker, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117-0531, 316 283-1612, Fax: 316 283-2107, E-mail: rpannabe@bethelks.edu

Kidron Community Historical Society, Bruce Detweiler Breckbill, director, Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center, 13153 Emerson Rd, PO Box 234, Kidron, OH 44636, 330 857-9111, E-mail: kidron@sssnet.com

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Carolyn Charles Wenger, 2215 Millstream Rd, Lancaster, PA 17602, 717 393-9745, Fax: 717 393-8751

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, Adolf Ens, president, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, E-mail: aens@mennonitechurch.ca, Web site: http://www.mmhs.org/

Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives, Lois B. Bowman, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Rd, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 432-4177, Fax: 540 432-4977, E-mail: bowmanlb@emu.edu, Web site: http://www.emu.edu

Menno-Hof, Jerry Beasley, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565-0701, 219 768-4117, Fax: 219 738-4118, E-mail: mennohof@tln.net

Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Samuel Steiner, Conrad Grebel College, Westmount Rd N, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6, 519 885-0220 ext. 238, Fax: 519 885-0014, E-mail: steiner@library.uwaterloo.ca

Mennonite Brethren Church (USA), Peggy Goertzen, Center for MB Studies, Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS 67063, 316 947-3121, Fax: 316 947-2607

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Mennonite Church Historical Association, John E. Sharp, Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church, 1700 S Main St, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7477, Fax: 219 535-7756, E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu, Web site: http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives

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Mennonite Heritage Center, Roy Showalter, 4850 Molly Pitcher Highway S, Chambersburg, PA 17201-9233, 717 375-4544

Mennonite Heritage Centre, Ken Reddig, Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, Fax: 204 831-5675, E-mail: kreddig@confmenno.ca, Web site: http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mhc/

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Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Royden Loewen, PO Box 21441, Steinbach, MB R0A 2T3, 204 326-2715 or 204 786-9391, Fax: 204 774-4134, E-mail: royloewen@u.winnipeg.ca

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Northwest Conference Historian, Harry Stauffer, RR 1, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0 403 662-2144

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Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society, Jerry Barkman, 9045 Wallace Rd NW, Salem, OR 97304, 503 363-2000, 503 873-6406

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Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren Archives, Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, SK S0K 1Z0

Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society, Leonard Doell, president, c/o Dick H. Epp, 2325 Cairns Ave, Saskatoon, SK S7J 1V1, 306 343-1238, E-mail: d-h-epp@home.com

Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, Steve Shenk, 1 Village Sq, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 433-7477, 540 432-4208, Fax: 540 432-4448, E-mail: shenks@emu.edu

South Central Mennonite Conference Historian, Bernice L. Hostetler, 149 E US Highway 160, Harper, KS 67058, 316 896-2040

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Recent Publications

Becker, John A., *Sherk, A Genealogy*. Order from author: 75 Roselawn Ave, Toronto, ON M4R 1E7.

Beiler, Allen R., *Beiler-Boiler-Byler*. Morgantown, PA: Masthof, 1998. Order from author: 577 Valley View Dr, New Holland, PA 17557.

Blosser, Elizabeth, *Abraham Blosser Family: Following the Westward Migration*. Milwaukie, OR: Published by author, 1997. Pp. 60. Order from author: 12705 SE River Rd, Apt 312N, Milwaukie, OR 97222.

Clegg, Mary Lou, *Susan Hochstetler Klopfenstein, Her Ancestors and Descendants*. Unpublished manuscript, 1995. Pp. 9. Order from author: PO Box 10931, Fort Wayne, IN 46854.

Dirks, Robert G., *Dirks History Book*. 1998. Order from author: 1948 Sheffield Way, Kamloops, BC V2E 2M2.

Frick, Ruth Hudson, *The Family of Leonard Michael and Anna Margaret Leidich*. $31. Order from: Melvin and Lois Leidig, 3212 7th St SW, Canton, OH 44710.

Hartman, Reginald Paul, *The Descendants of Philip and Christina (Schaarman) Hartman*. Annapolis, MD: Published by author, 1996. Pp. 50. Order from author: 2524 Painter Ct, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Hess, Charles R. and Viola, *Johan Georg Hess, 1707-1770*. Linden, MI: Published by authors, 1997. Order from authors: 4093 Lahring Rd, Linden, MI 48451-9471.

Jones, Wayne V. *The Bergstresser Family in America, Vol. II*. Houston, TX: Published by author, 1998. Order from: Elizabeth Rieke Jones, 3435 Westheimer Apt 908, Houston, TX 77027.

Kingan, Ruth Bowman, *A Bowman Genealogy*. Angola, NY: Published by author, 1992. Pp. 169. Order from author: 24 Glenwood Ave, Angola, NY 14006.

Klassen, Bill, *Descendants of Peter Niebuhr (1828-1894) and Margaret Petkau (1834-1916)*. Winnipeg, MB: Published by author, 1996. Pp. 105. Order from author: 120 Roselawn Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2G 1W6.

Kreider, Robert, *Joseph and Elizabeth (Shoemaker): A Sourcebook*. Order from: Shoemaker Family Association, PO Box 365, North Newton, KS 67117.

Kroeker, Lenora and Herbert Klassen, *Franz and Justina Klassen Family Book*. Published by authors. Order from: Herbert Klassen, PO Box 718, Sumas, WA 98295-0718.

Loewen, Violet, *Descendants of Martin and Helene Hiebert*. Order from author: 174 Howden Rd, Winnipeg, MB R2J 1L5.

Miller, Alfred D., *Descendants of Elias I. Yoder and Mary M. Miller, 1842-1997*. Apple Creek, OH: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: 8946 Mount Hope Rd, Apple Creek, OH 44606.

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Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church
1700 South Main Street
Goshen, IN 46526
Telephone: (219) 535-7477
Fax: (219) 535-7756
E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu
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"Did not our hearts burn within us?"

Reflections at the end of a journey

The third session of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Sommerfield, Illinois, 1867.
Photo credit: Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

by Robert Kreider

We of the General Conference have journeyed together for 139 years. Only a few were present at the beginning in 1860, many joining only recently. Now in our wanderings, we stand on the banks of a great river, poised with the Mennonite Church, about to cross together into a new land. Today we give thanks for blessings past, rejoice in blessings present, and pray for blessings to come.

Incredible: this moment in our journey. A time of death and a time of birth. A time of savored memories and a time of great expectations. A time of sadness and a time of joy. A time of gratitude for glimpses of God's grace and a time to dream and plan.

In 1971 at our triennial conference in Fresno, California, in the Schowalter Memorial Lecture, I sketched in 18-year modules the story of the General Conference: Reedley 1917, Upland 1935, Portland 1953, Fresno 1971, and then projected 18 years beyond to 1989. Many of those predictions I wish were erased, but in one I delight. I quote:

> Inter-Mennonite unity will come, perhaps not from negotiation at the institutional top, but in a variety of functional ways. New mission programs [together]. . . . Young congregations asking for dual conference membership. . . . With a providential development here, an inter-Mennonite . . . experience there—someday, someplace, some . . . will say: "It is here—a new Mennonite fellowship of congregations—and we had not planned it. It just happened. Or did it just happen?" If there is a 1989, it might be that in that year there will no

longer be a General Conference—and it may not be a story of death and sadness, but a story of birth and joy.

A prediction just 10 years off target!

Reflect on these 139 years as a journey with Abraham and Sarah—setting out for a place to be received as an inheritance—a journey of faith. Or consider these years as the long walk to the village of Emmaus; along the way two disciples discuss all the things that had happened. A stranger draws near, listens, talks with them, and interprets that which puzzles and troubles them. Arriving at the village, they invite the stranger, "Come, stay with us." At the table he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and he vanished. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened the Scriptures to us?" They hastened back to Jerusalem to share "what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread." Christ—Lord of our journey.

We sketch our long journey as a General Conference people—our walking the Emmaus way, again and again sensing the radiant presence of the Stranger as together we work, study, talk, witness, pray, sing, and break bread. This has been a spiritual journey. Along the way we have sung the haunting strains of "Stay with Us" and the yearning plea, "Come, O Blessed."

With time limited, I can sketch the story of the 139-year journey for only the first 100 years.

The decade of the 1860s. The General Conference was born in a time of trouble. The savage Civil War erupted in the United States. Far away in Russia, Mennonites split into two groups. A new nation was born: the Dominion of Canada. Thirteen years before, in 1847, in eastern Pennsylvania, Mennonites split over issues of practice and polity—alienation that has lasted for generations. Two hundred miles north of here along the Mississippi River in a borrowed meetinghouse near the village of West Point, Iowa, a few pastors from a handful of Swiss South German congregations met to form a loose fellowship: the General Conference (GC) of Mennonites in North America. In 1860, that Iowa meeting was out on the far western edge of Mennonite settlements. Audacious—this call to the Mennonites of all North America to form a union, to launch home and overseas missions, to publish literature, to establish a school for preparing pastors, and to send *Reiseprediger* (traveling pastors) to gather Mennonites into congregations. Within a few years, at Wadsworth, Ohio, they opened a school to support the vision for an awakened, unified Mennonite peoplehood. The presumptuousness of that tiny group, recent immigrants all!

The 1870s. Disappointments plagued the young Conference. Some supporters drifted away. Promising leaders died. The Wadsworth school closed. However, new life came from an unexpected source. Far away in Russia and Prussia, rulers introduced military conscription. Fearing loss of their nonresistant faith, Mennonites in Prussia, Austria, and Russia saw in North America a refuge. Leaders of the infant General Conference and Old Mennonites formed a Mennonite Board of Guardians to aid 18,000 Mennonites to migrate to the western prairies. A century ago, this first step in integration! Arriving in the new land, many of the immigrants found hospitality and commonality of spirit and purpose in the General Conference. In the next decades, these immigrants would enrich the young Conference with their gift for choral music, their flair for organization, their commitment to congregational polity, their concern for education, and their shared interest in missions. Meanwhile, congregations from the 1847 schism joined the Conference.

The 1880s and 1890s. By the century's end, an expansive United States muscled its way into being a colo-

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nial power. In this society of brawling capitalism and burgeoning cities, GC Mennonites remained a German-speaking rural people, in 1890 numbering only 5,000. However, the conference was busy gathering into its fellowship a rich new mix of Mennonite sub-groups, most of Dutch rather than Swiss lineage: Mennonites from West Prussia, Austria, Ukrainian Russia, Volhynia, Alicia, and Switzerland. Each came tenaciously separated by dialect, church polity, economic status, patterns of worship, and food systems. Gradually these diverse ethnic groups coalesced into the loose fellowship of the General Conference. The miracle of unity was achieved as they sang from a common hymnal, read a common periodical, joined in support of schools, and reached out in mission. In 1880, a mission in Oklahoma Territory was begun among the Native Americans in the Arapahoe and the Cheyenne tribes.

Those were exhilarating days of institution building: Sunday schools; committees and boards; a church paper—*The Mennonite;* homes for the aged; a publication center at Berne, Indiana, launching academies and colleges: Halstead and Bethel, Greta, Bluffton and Freeman. The General Conference belatedly was copying the confident, aggressive ways of American denominational institution-building. From a Russian immigrant pastor-educator, C. H. Wedel, came a bold, expansive vision for his people: a *Gemeinde Christentum* (a congregation-empowered people witnessing beyond to society)—an authentic Anabaptist vision 50 years before the Bender formulation. But, alas, a vision that failed to cross the language barrier from German to English.

The 1900s. Entering the new century, powerful new forces pressed in upon these separated, German-speaking General Conference Mennonites. Acculturation in the American melting pot. The invasion of the telephone, automobile and Sears Roebuck catalogs. The magnetic attraction of cities and professions. In the wake of the Spanish American War, the lure of flag-waving patriotism. Winds of secularism blew in from marketplace and university. And a host of persuasive religious movements beckoned enticingly to Mennonites insecure in their faith or impatient with a bland spirituality: revivalism, holiness movements, pentecostalism, dispensationalism, non-denominational Bible schools, Student Volunteer Movement, fundamentalism and also liberalism—Social Gospel and ecumenical doctrines, biblical criticism and varied forms of progressivism. With General Conference academies, colleges, and seminary not firmly in place, our people were buffeted by strong currents that sometimes swept away the unwary. Yet the Conference had much to celebrate: the opening of a mission in India and, by 1906, a doubling of membership to 12,000. With its core commitment to unity, the Conference gained a denominational legitimacy when it joined the ecumenical Federal Council of Churches. Meanwhile, two groups who would later join in the GC journey, formally organized: the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Central Conference (a group of Illinois congregations of Stucky Amish origins.

The 1910s. Americans rode the crest of an era of progressivism: Roosevelt and Wilson in the White House. Missionaries were sent to the Congo and to China. City missions opened in Los Angeles, Chicago, Peoria, Hutchinson, and Altona. Membership grew to 18,000—50 percent growth in a decade. In response to an editorial in *The Mennonite*, the first of a series of five All-Mennonite Conferences was held—again the GCs carrying the torch for inter-Mennonite unity. Mennonite pastors visited sister congregations in western Canada, offering the hand of fellowship. More than 500 youth were enrolled in Mennonite colleges. Bethel and Bluffton began to offer A.B. degrees. GCs were moving into the towns and entering the professions. GCs, once a separated people, were priding themselves on being accepted as good Americans. Then the shock of United States entry into the Great War. Pacifist Mennonites were shaken by rejection and harassment from erstwhile friendly neighbors. Long thereafter they would feel guilt in their inability to gather as Historic Peace Churches to cope with issues of the draft. The Conference withdrew from a Federal Council of Churches caught up in the fervor of a great patriotic war. Mennonites were still a fragmented people. Several hundred peace-minded GCs fled to Canada for refuge. Also, buoyed by wartime profits; giving to the General Conference soared.

The 1920s. In the wake of World War I, secular, worldly forces invaded rural General Conference communities: the automobile, radio, Hollywood, centralized schools. Intimidated by wartime anti-German feelings, congregations abandoned German for English. Farm prices collapsed. Angry theological winds stirred up acrimonious church conflicts. With Old Mennonites (MCs) suffering from a period of stress, several M.C. congregations and a number of their young leaders joined the General Conference and, thus, added strength. This exodus, however, scarred MC-GC relations. The Bolshevik revolution, civil war, famine, and terror that struck in far-off Russia awakened American Mennonites to the plight of distant kinfolk, among them, martyrs to their faith. The General Conference engaged earnestly in the creation of the Mennonite Central Committee. Most important, 20,000 Mennonite immigrants poured into Canadian prairie provinces. Soon 41 Canadian congregations joined the General Conference, bringing the

Conference total to 159 by 1929. Within a generation, this influx of Canadians would enrich enormously the vitality and spiritual life of the General Conference. Meanwhile, the Conference opened at Bluffton, Ohio, Witmarsum Theological Seminary for the preparation of pastors. Dozens volunteered for the mission fields in India and China. Shaken by a lack of preparedness for World War I, peace committees were organized. Youth societies flourished. In 1929, several months before the stock market crash, the Conference held its first triennial session, not in a church, but at Hutchinson, Kansas, in a city hall, the delegates staying in hotels and eating in restaurants. Then came the Great Depression.

The 1930s. Deep in the Depression, the next triennial conference was postponed a year, the meeting held in 1933 in Bluffton. In that troubled decade, institutions struggled. In 1931, Witmarsum Seminary closed. In 1932, Bethel College was in danger of closing, with Bluffton and Freeman colleges in peril. The Great Plains suffered the worst drought in history. War threatened in Europe. Mussolini, Stalin, Franco, and Hitler bullied their way to power. Japanese armies overran the mission field in China. Amidst this, the General Conference evidenced an inner resilience. The colleges rebounded. In 1935, the Foreign Mission Board reported 1300 church members in India 1000 in China. The Congo Inland Mission, not yet a Conference program, reported 3000. The Conference Peace Committee became active. In 1935 the General Conference leaders hosted in Newton a landmark meeting of the Historic Peace Churches that lay groundwork for united action in event of war. And war came, September 1, 1939, as Nazi troops invaded Poland.

The 1940s. For six years, a savage war engulfed the globe, leaving 50 million dead and a legacy of the Holocaust and nuclear annihilation. War laid bare the uneven commitment of GCs to peace. A majority of drafted young men entered military service. But under wartime test, GCs rebounded. In the United States, they joined other Mennonite groups, plus Brethren and Quakers, in a program to administer Civilian Public Service—the biggest institutional enterprise in all Mennonite history. GCs contributed a substantial number of leaders to that program. In Canada, three major Mennonite groups negotiated with the government in behalf of alternative service for COs. Buoyed by a sense of confidence in their wartime efforts, GCs gave generously and volunteered in numbers to MCC's global program of relief and reconstruction. At war's end, finding 11,000 Mennonite refugees from Russia and West Prussia homeless in Germany, MCC coordinated a massive resettlement program in Canada and South America. The Conference opened a headquarters in Newton. A mission opened in Colombia. Mennonite Biblical Seminary was born in Chicago. The Central Conference joined the General Conference and brought with it the largest mission field of all in the Congo. Canadian Mennonite Bible College opened. After the war, from Canada flowed into the Conference the greatest stream of pastoral, missionary, and institutional leadership in its history. The irony for the General Conference in that tragic decade of war: that was also a time of renewal and restored confidence.

The 1950s. The General Conference we know today was born in the 1950s: a new constitution with four boards, generous constituency funding, the influx of new young leaders tested in wartime and postwar service, opening of mission fields in Taiwan and Japan launching of Voluntary Service, a series of conferences to tackle issues of Conference identity and purpose a recovery of a sense of Anabaptist identity. GCs had known in their bones what it meant to be Anabaptist Mennonites, but now this identity was coming into articulated focus. Exhilarating days. Enhanced by wartime income, the 1950s witnessed an explosion of institution building: retirement communities, church camps, mutual aid enterprises, local church construction, expansion of college campuses. The walls of Mennonite separation breached during the war. the General Conference became partner in a host of inter-Mennonite enterprises, many under the MCC umbrella: psychiatric centers, Mennonite Disaster Service, MCC Relief Sales, canning for relief, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Menno Travel Service, MEDA—at last count, 79 inter-Mennonite entities and linkages. The most significant event of the decade was the decision to move Mennonite Biblical Seminary from Chicago to Elkhart, there to be linked to Goshen Biblical Seminary, then step by step to become integrated Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Conclusion. From this bonding of the two conferences has come a series of covenant acts that have brought us together in kinship on a common journey. We have become brothers and sisters as we have broken bread together: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, a common hymnal, Sunday school literature, Women in Mission, integrated ministerial placement, integrated Voluntary Service, a jointly administered Latin American mission program, a directory, integrated Pacific and Ontario conferences, *The Mennonite*, a *Confession of Faith*, and hundreds of committee meetings.

At the century mark of our General Conference, 1960, we broke off the story of our journey. More have joined the wayfarers. Today in North America, we gather to worship in more than two dozen languages: from America English to Cree to Laotian to Spanish to

Vietnamese. This weekend at St. Louis, meeting on the banks of a great river, we are like Abraham and Sarah regrouping our caravans, about to set out again in faith for a land where we shall receive our inheritance. A later biblical image—to the stranger who has been accompanying us on our walk, we plead "Come, stay with us." "Come, stay with us." Someday we may say of this journey with the stranger, Lord of the Walk, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road, as he opened to us the Scriptures?" and "how he made himself known to us in the breaking of the bread." From a more distant past, we hear words spoken to Abraham: "I will bless you. . . . You will be a blessing."

From West Point, Iowa, 1860 to St. Louis 1999—139 years, a journey of faith with Christ, beckoning onward, looking forward "to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

—Robert Kreider, North Newton, Kansas, is a passionate historian and churchman. Kreider gave this address at the final General Assembly of the General Conference Mennonite Church, St. Louis 99, July 23, 1999.

Highlights of the Mennonite Church General Assemblies, 1971-1999

by J. Ron Byler

The following actions and highlights of the 15 Mennonite Church General Assemblies were given as the Mennonite Church General Board Staff Report to the delegates of St. Louis 99. In 1971, the Mennonite Church General Assembly replaced the former organization known as Mennonite General Conference, which was founded in 1898. At St. Louis 99, the final session of the Mennonite Church General Assembly was held, making way for the new Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

These actions and highlights were largely excerpted from the introductions of the Assembly Proceedings booklets. They are offered, not as an attempt to include every action and activity of the General Assembly, but simply as a way to help us *remember* the flavor of our work together and the commitment of this body to follow the way of Jesus.

Kitchener, Ontario (1971).

The 74-year-old Mennonite General Conference met for its last session in August 1971 at Rockway Mennonite School. A constitutional assembly adopted new bylaws, and the first meeting of the Mennonite Church General Assembly immediately followed. Five regions and five program boards were established, and the General Board was asked to arrange for the Board of Congregational Ministries, the Historical Committee, and the Council on Faith, Life and Strategy to organize and begin their work.

Harrisonburg, Virginia (1973).

At Assembly 73 at Eastern Mennonite College, delegates worked to understand their role in seeking consensus on the decisions and issues facing the church. Major blocks of time were spent discussing two issues—"Amnesty" and "The Role of Women in the Church." The assembly heard a message and findings from a cross-cultural theological consultation. The centrality of the congregation and the mission thrust of the Mennonite Church were affirmed.

Eureka, Illinois (1975).

Attendance at Assembly 75 exceeded expectations and severely taxed the facilities at Eureka College. After vigorous discussion, summary statements on "Abortion," on "Biblical Understandings of Women and Men in the Church," and on "Amnesty" were adopted. A Jubilee Fund was established to liquidate the debt of the General Board and the Board of Congregational Ministries.

Estes Park, Colorado (1977).

The churchwide gathering in Colorado at the YMCA of the Rockies was a combination of the biennial session of General

Moderators of the Mennonite Church: (standing) Donella Clemens, 1993-1995; George R. Brunk III, 1989-1991; Owen Burkholder, 1995-1997, and (seated) Dwight J. McFadden, Jr., 1997-1999.

Assembly delegates, an inspirational convention meeting, and a youth convention. Two statements on "the life of the church" were adopted by the Assembly—one on "The Holy Spirit" and a second on "Biblical Interpretation." Two ad hoc reports on urban concerns and social justice were approved by this Assembly.

Waterloo, Ontario (1979).

The Mennonite Church General Assembly gathered for Waterloo 79 at Conrad Grebel College on the campus of the University of Waterloo. The Assembly adopted a resolution on urban concerns. Two statements, one on "Affirming Our Faith in Word and Deed" and the second on "Militarism and Conscription," were also adopted. A "Message to Sister Churches Overseas" asked for prayer "that we may resist the many temptations to compromise our witness through materialism, accommodation to militarism, and conformity to the world's standards."

Bowling Green, Ohio (1981).

During Assembly 81 at Bowling Green State University, delegates appointed a committee to conduct a 10-year review of the new Mennonite Church organization. Two statements, one on "Leadership and Authority in the Life of the Church" and a second on "The Use of the Law," were passed by delegates. A "Resolution Concerning Security and the Current World Arms Race" was also approved. Assembly 81 concluded with a reaffirmation of "our desire to continue in and witness to the nonresistant and simple faith in Christ, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (1983).

Bethlehem 83 on the campus of Lehigh University was a time to celebrate 300 years of Mennonite life and witness in North America. It was also a time for the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church to become better acquainted through joint worship and fellowship, though delegates met for business separately. MC delegates approved a statement on "Inter-Mennonite Cooperation in North America" and a second on "Justice and the Christian Witness." A "Vision for Witness" statement was affirmed, as was a resolution on "Central America," and another on "Mennonite Tricentennial." A "Call to Faithful Stewardship" was adopted for study for the next biennium.

Ames, Iowa (1985).

Iowa State University was the site for the 1985 General Assembly. Ten-year goals were adopted, goals that later became known as Vision 95. The goals gave specific encouragement for growth of the church in number, witness, and giving. A committee to work with the General Conference on a new confession of faith was approved. A resolution in response to the farm crisis was also approved, as was a proposal to give priority to the allocation of budget funds for minority education. The "Central America" resolution of the previous Assembly was reaffirmed.

West Lafayette, Indiana (1987).

Purdue 87, held on the campus of Purdue University, has become closely linked with what we now call the Purdue statement: "A Call to Affirmation, Confession, and Covenant Regarding Human Sexuality." The 1987 Assembly also passed a "Resolution on South Africa" and adopted a statement on "Growing in Stewardship and Mission in a Militaristic World." Many area conferences enthusiastically reported progress toward the Vision 95 goals.

Normal, Illinois (1989).

The children, youth, and adults attending the Normal 89 gathering of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church were a living demonstration of the convention theme, "Many Peoples Becoming God's People." Three resolutions, the first on military tax withholding, the second on confronting racism, and the third on environment and faith issues, were passed by delegates. A recommendation on "Exploring MC/GC Integration" was adopted. "We must pursue the work of God," concluded the incoming moderator. He urged delegates "to learn from the past but to yearn for the future."

Eugene, Oregon (1991).

At Oregon 91, in the Eugene fairgrounds and convention center, United Native Ministries Council was recognized as an associate group of the Mennonite Church. Delegates also asked the General Board to discern how the

The General Board of the Mennonite Church gathered for final reflections at St. Louis.

Mennonite Church can give priority to peace leadership. A resolution "On Observing 1992" was passed. Delegates spent time discussing four issues—lifestyles for Christian disciples, a congregational peace education initiative, unity and diversity, and priorities for the future. Churchwide agencies, conferences, and congregations were asked to mark progress toward the Normal 89 statement on racism.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1993).

For Philadelphia 93, we gathered for the first time in the downtown of a major city. We adopted resolutions on "Health Care in the United States" and on "Male Violence Against Women." Two statements, "Peace in Our Time" and "A Commitment to Christ's Way of Peace," were approved for study and discussion in our congregations and conferences, and a "Call for a Peacemaking Task Force" was approved.

Wichita, Kansas (1995).

Wichita 95 was the third joint gathering of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. A "commitment to move toward integration" captured much time and attention. Just as significant was the adoption of a new "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective" and the forward-looking "Vision: Healing & Hope" statement with six accompanying priorities. The statement, "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love," was commended for use in decision-making and in managing conflicts among us.

Orlando, Florida (1997).

In the introduction to the Orlando proceedings, I comment that the actions of this assembly "have the effect of looking back at the 'historic' actions of Wichita 95 and looking forward to what promise to be substantive changes in the structure and integration of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church." In Orlando, delegates overwhelmingly approved integration votes on name, time frame, and periodicals. In other activity, delegates adopted the Mennonite statement on violence, "And No One Shall Make Them Afraid," as well as resolutions on global mission, congregational youth ministry, and immigration.

To complete the summary of assemblies, the following comments from St. Louis are added.

St. Louis, Missouri (1999).

We thank God for the Mennonite Church General Assembly during these past 28 years.

Five strong program boards and four able associate groups have given faithful witness to God in word and deed. Twenty-one area conferences have nurtured and encouraged our congregations and have generously supported the work of the denomination.

The Mennonite Church General Board and this General Assembly body have helped lead the church in its mission and witness. But we are changing once more, and we are eager to see what God will do among us as a new Mennonite Church.

We invite your reflection and counsel as we move forward together with our General Conference brothers and sisters.

—J. Ron Byler is associate general secretary of the Executive Board of the Mennonite Church USA and is a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

I Wish I'd Been There

Readers respond to the question: What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and Why?

I Wish I'd Been There: Schleitheim Synod

by Myron S. Augsburger

This is a photo of the oldest existing copy of the "Brotherly Union" of 1527, housed at the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.
Photo Credit: Jan Gleysteen Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church.

One of the greater events of the Reformation was the Schleitheim Synod. Its impact has been underestimated among many of us, but not so by its contemporaries. The Reformers of Switzerland wrote that they could scarcely find an Anabaptist who did not carry a handwritten copy of this confession. While it was not a full statement of faith, it spoke to the crucial issues of identity and unity for the group. This meeting has a very high rating in my own study and reflections on the 16th century. I would have liked to have been present for the following reasons:

First, because it was the Anabaptist answer to the martyrdom of Felix Manz and others, it was a gathering that may well have determined the fate of the movement—whether it would live or die.

Second, it was a creative and daring thing for the believers church to call a synod, and to have done so before the other movements of the Reformation, Lutheran and Reformed, had called such a gathering.

Third, Michael Sattler's leadership, only a few months before his arrest and martyrdom, was a very formative influence for the Anabaptist movement; his story going down the Rhine to the Netherlands already in 1527.

Fourth, the process and spirit of the meeting and of the written confession gives special attention to the discernment and unifying work of the Holy Spirit among them.

Fifth, the confession is clearly christological, distinguishing between the church within the perfection of Christ and society outside the perfection of Christ.

Sixth, this conference rejected the

use of the sword and took a very positive and unapologetic stance for peace and non-violence.

Seventh, the group drew up plans for the evangelization of Europe and adjourned with these plans as their directives.

Among other things, these seven points present the uniqueness of this first and special synod, a gathering of religious leaders without officials from the state. While 200 years ahead of recognition in the New World of the principle of religious freedom, this gathering was a revolutionary pointer to a new day.

—Myron S. Augsburger, Harrisonburg, Virginia, is pastor emeritus of Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship and teaches theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

I Wish I'd Been There: Tanganyika, 1942

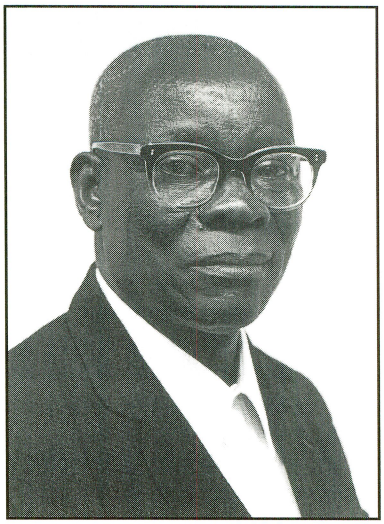
by James Hertzler

Seven congregations of Tanganyikan Mennonites and Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions missionaries (EMBM, Lancaster) met in a conference on a Sunday afternoon in Shirati, early August 1942. They gathered at 3:30 p.m. for communion, but that sacrament was postponed for the moment because of stresses within the Tanganyikan church. At the end of that meeting, which did not break up until 9:00 p.m., Africans and missionaries were changed people. I wish I'd been there to witness that.

Revival had been happening throughout East Africa since the latter 1920s, beginning in Rwanda and spreading to the Belgian Congo, Tanganyika, Kenya, and the Sudan. Mennonite missions began on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria in the mid-1930s, initiated by the Lancaster (Pa.) Conference mission board, the EMBM. Pioneer missionaries were Elam and Elizabeth Stauffer and John and Ruth Mosemann. Consultation with other missionaries on the field led the Mennonites to the village of Shirati, near the border of Kenya.

Evangelistic, educational, and medical activities began immediately, and additional missionaries came in. They were instructed to present the gospel in ways appropriate to the local African culture, but the missionaries had not been well prepared in cultural anthropology. Misunderstandings and strains developed between missionaries and the African converts and between the missionaries and their home board in Lancaster. African customs such as knocking out front teeth, stretching ear lobes, and especially polygamy were opposed by missionaries who wanted to impose new customs such as requiring black shoes, unmustached faces for men, and uncut hair for women. Missionaries were sometimes insensitive to their African brothers and sisters. The Africans ridiculed the cultural errors and personal habits of the missionaries and were jealous of the apparent wealth and power of the Westerners. Impatience, gossip, hypocrisy, and sin were present, according to Bishop Z. Kisari.

Preaching and prayer preceded the conference in Shirati in 1942. On the last day of the conference, there was a feeling that "God would visit us," wrote Kisari. Prayer, silence, and weeping occurred. Kisari described the event, writing, "It was as when you strike a match to petrol." People began confessing their sins and "our self-righteousness melted before one another."



Bishop Z. Kisari. Photo credit: Dale G. Gehman

The five-and a half-hour meeting closed with prayer. In Bishop Kisari's words, "That August evening in 1942, the Holy Spirit gave us the insight that both the missionaries and the Africans were all lost from that one true village of God the Father."

Lives were changed, of Africans and missionaries alike, and they experienced new peace and joy with each other. The mission of the church expanded in the latter 1940s, and African leadership emerged with ever-greater authority over their church.

—James Hertzler is retired after 32 years on the faculty at Goshen College as a history professor, teaching African history among other things. He is an active member of College Mennonite Church.

Embarrassing Situations

by Jep Hostetler

The ultimate form of laughter is when we can laugh at ourselves! We often hear the statement, "Someday we are all going to laugh about this." Why wait until someday? Why not begin laughing right now and get more mileage out of the situation? Okay, so it is difficult to laugh when you are right in the middle of a trying situation, and I may be a bit facetious, but it is a good idea to think about ways to lighten up when it comes to taking ourselves too seriously.

Recently friends of our related a story about their son who had just learned to drive. He was given permission to use the car to go the church softball game that evening with the explicit instructions that he was not to take any passengers with him. As the evening progressed, our friends found themselves at a local ice cream shop that had windows all around the building and wide, cement cruising lanes. As they were enjoying their hot fudge goodies, they glanced up to see their son touring the parking lot with a young lady by his side. He seemed to be proud as a peacock to be able to sport this young lady around with his newly earned skills as a driver.

The son was unfortunate enough to have his eyes meet the eyes of his parents. Oops! "Quick," he said to his female passenger, "duck down so my parents can't see you." It was too late. What to do, what to do? Clearly, the day of reckoning was at hand. (Don't you just hate it when something like this happens to you?)

> *Stories of embarrassing situations, when told on one's self and understood by the gathered audience, are solid fodder for the laughter mill.*

When the parents arrived home, young driver son was waiting in the living room. He faced the music, took his disciplinary stripes, and decided against future indiscretions in this particular venue. It was indeed a bad hair day. Ugh!

Years later, the son recounts this story with a great deal of fanfare, embellishment, and humor. The extended family gets a genuine hoot out of the story as they laugh until tears come to their eyes. "Someday we will laugh about this" has become "today," and the family enjoys hearing the episode being retold.

Stories of embarrassing situations, when told on one's self and understood by the gathered audience, are solid fodder for the laughter mill. We discover that others have had similar situations happen to them, and the strength of humor lies in the shared experience or identification with the contents of the story. This is the main reason comedian and humorist Bill Cosby is so funny to many people. He simply tells common stories that have a great deal in common with our own experiences. He does embellish them, exaggerate the content, and even adds sounds and descriptions that capture the imagination.

Embarrassing situations can be turned into funny stories. All it takes is time, a sense of humor, and an imagination. Why not resurrect some of your past embarrassments and share them with your small group, your children, or your grandchildren? If they are couched with a "tongue in cheek" attitude and announced with a cover of uncertainty as to the exact details, I can assure you that especially the grandchildren will enjoy hearing about your past foibles.

—Jep Hostetler, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, is a humor consultant and author. He is an associate professor emeritus at the Ohio State University College of Medicine. He and his wife, Joyce, serve as the staff persons for the Mennonite Medical Association.

Managing Mennonite Memory, Mennonite Central Committee, 1920-

(Fifth in a series)

by Irene Leaman

Introduction

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) collection at the Archives of the Mennonite Church continues to beckon me. During a recent visit, Dennis Stoesz, archivist, asked me to write an article on MCC records management. I readily agreed. MCC historical records have intrigued me for the past twenty years. Preserving MCC history concerned the Executive Committee from the beginning. Only the method has changed. Begun as a small collection of files in the homes of administrators, the collection has grown into a centralized electronic system maintained by the Records Department.

For the purposes of this article, I will address only the MCC Binational and MCC U.S. records. Although MCC also has some MCC Canada records, MCC Canada preserves its official records in the Mennonite Heritage Centre on the campus of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Early History of MCC Records, 1920-1945

MCC was born in 1920, responding to an appeal from the Russian Mennonites suffering from war and famine. The records for this period, 1920-1935, were kept by the secretary, Levi Mumaw, in his home in Scottdale, Pennsylvania. Most of the correspondence was carried out by the secretary at that time. The files were arranged chronologically.

During the following years, in the 1930s and 1940s, MCC relief for victims of war and natural disaster spread from Europe to Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. MCC headquarters followed the next secretary, Orie O. Miller, to his home in Akron, Pennsylvania. From this modest beginning in the large white house on the corner of Main and 11th streets, MCC headquarters today consists of five buildings in the Akron and Ephrata area with about 200 staff members.

In 1937, the year MCC was incorporated, the Executive Committee pondered what would become of the old files. The December 30, 1937, Executive Committee meeting recorded the following action.

> It was voted to take over all the official records and correspondence of the old Mennonite Central Committee and its officers and place them in the custodianship of the secretary-treasurer. The active material shall be placed in the hands of the secretary and made a part of the corporation records. The remaining material is to remain the property of the Mennonite Central Committee but shall be deposited in the Mennonite archive to be established in the new Goshen College Library building. The

MCC headquarters in Akron, PA

Irene Leaman, Records/Library and Archives Manager, retrieving a file from the inactive file area.

officers and members are requested to deposit with the secretary for incorporation in the archives any documents or correspondence in their hands relating to the official business and activities of the committee or which may cast light on the policies and activities of the committee.

In the early 1940s, MCC became involved in administering the Civilian Public Service Camps. The Executive Committee discussed the voluminous files created from Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps in December 1945. H. A. Fast, at the request of the Executive Committee, studied the problem of handling the CPS files and made the following recommendation:

(a) These files should remain under M.C.C. supervision and control. For the present, they should be housed at Akron, Pennsylvania, in a fireproof structure. Permanent housing of C.P.S. files should await permanent location of M.C.C. headquarters.
(b) Supervision of the files and access to them should be under the administrative control of the Executive Secretary.
(c) Access to files should be under the following conditions: Written registration providing all necessary information about the person seeking use of files, including a statement describing his purpose and giving assurance that the information gained will be used to a constructive purpose and that confidential matters, legal and otherwise, will be respected as confidential.
(d) Duplicate copies in M.C.C. files may upon request be made available to N.S.B. (National Service Board) - C.P.S. files if needed there to complete its records.

At the same meeting, the committee acted on the larger set of CPS files created by the National Service Board for Religious Objectors. This organization acted as an umbrella for the three peace church groups who administered the CPS camps: Friends (Quakers), Church of the Brethren, and MCC.

(a) These files should be kept intact, located in a site acceptable to the cooperating peace church agencies and left in the hands of a competent archivist and accessible to the public under conditions set forth by the Board of Control appointed by these groups. Expenses shall be shared on an equitable basis by the three groups. Temporarily it would appear best to gather these files at the N.S.B. office in Washington until a permanent location can be agreed upon.

Central Filing System Organized, 1946-1975

A major shift in record keeping occurred in 1946 when a central filing system was organized. Department directors desired a more unified filing system, and the research section of CPS needed to coordinate the activities of each department. Consolidating the files seemed a good option. In May 1946, the Executive Committee authorized the Executive Secretary to engage a filing expert to set up a filing system. The 1946 MCC workbook reported the following:

Mr. Bennie Bargen, of Bethel College, a filing expert, came to headquarters the first of June, 1946, to set up a central filing system. On August 1st, the actual work of filing current material was begun.

Bargen reported his findings to the Executive Committee in September, 1946. He noted that there were 200 file drawers in the office. Some of the material was of great value, he commented, and some was of no value. He attached a table of obsolescence to his report as a guide to disposition of the files and recommended assigning two full-time file clerks. He also recommended indexing all Executive Committee minute actions to be "undertaken at once."

The 1961 Revised Central Files Manual included the following purpose statement.

The purpose of the Central files is to bring together in one place and in one system for the entire organization all material of a general nature accurately and neatly arranged for prompt reference. . . . It cross-indexes material

so fully that all material of a given topic or related subject can be found easily....

According to the manual, each department had its own set of files until 1946. Filing was not consistent, and letters routed from one department to another were often lost. The manual outlined in detail all procedures and practices of the Central Files Department.

Although central filing and the manual were an excellent beginning, implementing the decision was difficult. Confidence in the Central Files Department was low. If a letter could not be found, where was it? Was it the problem of the department who neglected to send it to Central Files, or was it misfiled? Who could know?

In 1975, at MCC's request, Miriam Weaver from Eastern Mennonite College, evaluated the central filing system. Weaver noted in her report that nothing indicated filing had a very high priority in the MCC office. She added that many administrators considered their departments an exception to the requirements of central filing guidelines. Weaver introduced the concept of records management. This concept evolved slowly. The name change from Central Files to Records Department did not happen until 1983.

From Central Files to Records Management

Records management includes managing the entire paper cycle from creation to disposition. The methods of records management vary according to the needs of an institution. However, records management always involves the monitoring of records, regardless of type or format throughout their life cycle.

When I came to MCC in 1979, we had some 300 files in the Central Files Department divided into two sections. The correspondence section consisted of both incoming letters and copies of outgoing letters. The data section had reports of various types. Each week the different departments sent to the Central Files Department a folder containing their correspondence and reports of that week. The Central Files staff coded this material and filed it into appropriate files. If any of the documents were needed again, the file clerks located the document.

Active files are kept in the center of the office where they are easily available. After three years, files are considered inactive and moved to the basement. During this time, the files are still nearby if needed, but do not take valuable office space. The inactive file area is something like purgatory. It is a place where files are kept until their value is determined and they are sent to their final destination.

The Executive Committee decided that the files should be transferred to the archives after a period of ten years. Each year the ten-year-old files are weeded by the Records Department manager to remove materials of passing value. The remaining materials are placed into acid free file folders and sent to the archives. With this method, about a third of the collection is saved.

Bargen and Weaver's recommendations worked well at a time when there were only a few hundred files each year. However, as the organization grew, we had more than 1,000 files for each year. The simple filing system of alphabetical filing became a problem. How could anyone scan 1,000 file titles and know where to place a document?

In 1986, I completed an archives course at a local university. This provided the knowledge I needed to change our filing system. I changed our previous A-Z filing method to filing by department. I realized this method could create the need to have similar files in different departments. Consequently, I created project files in addition to the usual correspondence and data files. The files were placed under the department responsible for the work.

For example, creating project files meant that any letter regarding a hurricane in Honduras was filed into the Honduras Hurricane file, regardless of who wrote the memo. If the Latin America Department assumed responsibility to address the needs of Honduras at this time, the file was placed with the Latin America Department files. If Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) assumed responsibility for the

Dawn Martin, Records and Library Assistant, scanning Executive Committee minutes into the computer.

Phil Horst, Computer Services Manager and Irene Leaman working on electronic filing.

work, it was placed with the MDS Department files.

We maintained an organizational chart each year to note administrative changes. This created an organizational history. In addition, we maintained a subject authority list. We noted what project names were currently used as well as project names no longer used. This list was useful, and still is, when programs change their names or restructuring places them in different departments.

The Orphan Support Program, for example, began in Korea in the 1950s. Various sponsorship programs emerged that were later combined into the Child Sponsorship Program. In 1976, the name was changed to the Sponsorship Program. In 1988, the name changed again to become the current Global Family Program.

Collection Policies and Disposition Schedules

With the filing system organized, the next step meant creating a collection policy. According to the policy adopted "the purpose of the MCC archival collection is to preserve the historical and legal documents of MCC." The objectives are to provide access to information for current administration, for research, and to "provide for posterity, the historical accounts of MCC policies, programs, and activities." MCC does not archive materials from other agencies, even though various materials are received regularly for the purpose of sharing information.

Using the collection policy, we already have the beginning of a disposition schedule. Bargen referred to the disposition schedule as a "table of obsolescence" in 1946. What to keep and what to discard requires a thorough knowledge of the institution and its programs and is the most challenging aspect of archival or records management.

MCC records are divided into twenty-five specific departments. I met with staff to create a specific schedule for each department. The collection policy can clarify materials that are found in every department. We keep all minutes, program plans, administrative trip reports, policies, contracts, semi-annual worker reports, and published materials permanently. Disposition schedules further address each department's unique files that need individual assessment.

Microfilming

Creating a disposition schedule is challenging work, but equally challenging is deciding how to keep information. In 1958, the Executive Committee agreed that the CPS files would be microfilmed and the paper discarded.

Microfilm is expected to last several hundred years. Some predictions are 500 years. Much depends on standards for filming as well as methods of storing. The CPS film began deteriorating 40 years after filming. Examining the microfilm carefully, our current microfilm provider concluded that a chemical residue had remained on the film. All 129 reels of film needed to be refilmed.

MCC continued microfilming personnel files after the CPS files were filmed, but it was not until 1989, when archival storage costs began to climb, that MCC decided to microfilm the majority of its materials.

Like all mediums of preservation, microfilming has its own special problems. Microfilming is permanent. It is difficult to add forgotten files after filming. Files must be in perfect order before filming, and the film must be checked for the three Cs: Is it clean? Is it clear? Is it complete? After one filming, we discovered the camera was out of focus. The entire collection needed to be reassembled and refilmed.

Some materials, such as posters, packets, blueprints, and certain legal documents, retain their intrinsic value only in their original form. Consequently, MCC keeps a small

collection of printed materials. There is no doubt, however, that microfilming is an excellent way to save space and at the same time preserve information when filming and storing meet archival standards.

Electronic Filing, 1998-

Today e-mail is the preferred method of communication. Nearly all correspondence between MCC Akron headquarters and other MCC offices, including MCC overseas offices, is done by e-mail. Frequently secretaries asked, "Do you really want us to print out all our e-mail?" Until 1998, we said "yes," but with some hesitation. I knew that eventually electronic filing must be considered.

We already used the computer for administrative functions in the Records Department. We put all of the file titles, including those already at the archives, on computer so that we could search for file titles. We scanned all of the Executive Committee meeting minutes into the computer. The ISYS text-retrieval system enabled us to search the minutes for information. (I used ISYS to find information for this article.) Filing by computer was only a step away.

When part of the Overseas Department moved to Winnipeg, electronic filing became a "hot" topic. Phil Horst, manager of MCC Computer Services, had been exceptionally helpful in our previous applications of computer technology; I knew I could count on him again to provide the technical assistance needed for electronic filing. "Well, Phil," I said, "I think we're being forced into it." We decided to use the Africa Department as a pilot project.

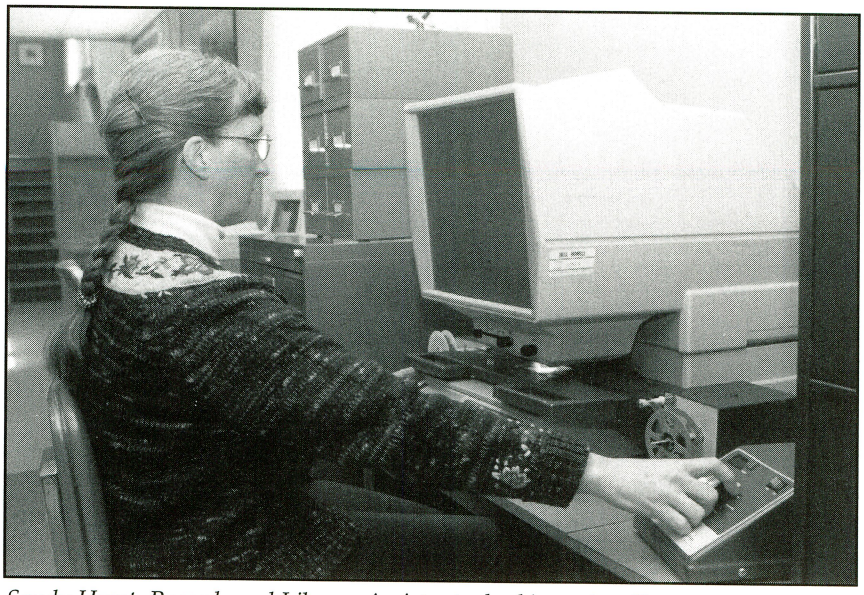
The first attempt was disappointing. I wanted to continue keeping the files organized by department. Otherwise, I reasoned, we would get too many hits using word search that would be more confusing than helpful. However, we discovered that we had too many layers and needed to do too much scrolling. Filing was time consuming.

Phil tried again and this time reached a perfect solution. Using Lotus Notes, he created separate databases for each department. Clicking on a database, we have various options. We can choose from the "in" box to see if any new e-mail needs filing, or we can go directly into a file. Clicking on "all" allows us to see everything in that database. Using word search, we can quickly locate a document.

E-mail from departments in the MCC Akron office, regional offices, and overseas offices in Winnipeg is automatically sent by blind carbon copy directly to their database in the Records Department unless it is manually deleted.

Word Perfect documents can also be transferred to a database. Obviously, we still have mail coming into the office. At this time, we are keeping incoming mail in its original form.

Many questions remain. Will we weed the electronic files after ten years as we do the paper files? Should we scan incoming mail into the computer and discard that paper also? What about confidential materials? We solved the latter question by printing confidential materials and deleting them from the database. By having separate databases for each department, persons in each department also have access only to their own records.



Sandy Horst, Records and Library Assistant, checking microfilm.

Files From MCC Offices Around the World

In the past, there have been a few times when overseas offices closed and the files were sent to the archives. In recent years, I have been making a concerted effort to gather files from overseas offices.

In Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, with the help of staff, we separated the files into three categories. Current files and files needed for continuing administrative work stayed in the overseas offices. The remaining files were discarded or placed in boxes to ship to the MCC Akron headquarters.

I have found that overseas files not retrieved within ten to fifteen

years are victims of rodents, cockroaches, silverfish, ants, humidity, and dust. Most dangerous, however, are well-meaning staff who see no need for "keeping all this old stuff."

Conclusion

At the present time, we use three forms of preservation: print, microfilm, and computer. My predictions are that after we have microfilmed all the inactive files now stored in the basement, microfilming will become an obsolete method of preservation. The small amount of paper left can easily be scanned into the computer. I may be wrong. We do not know if the computers of the future will be compatible with present-day computers. We also know that information on the computer can be altered. On the other hand, we know that microfilm will always be readable. We know that it is permanent; no one can alter it. It is reassuring that either of these mediums can be converted to paper at any time if desired.

The theory of records management is simple, but practice is not. Organizational structures change. Names of departments change. Technology changes. Perhaps most important are personnel changes. Any of these changes will bring new possibilities, new ideas, and new problems. Today, records managers not only collect files and decide what to keep, they must also stay abreast of current technology and preservation practices.

At MCC, the Records Department is administratively lodged in the Administrative Services Department. We still function with the equivalent of two full-time staff. If Miriam Weaver evaluated the Records Department today, I hope she would see evidence that preserving MCC history is an important part of MCC administration. And indeed it is.

—Irene Leaman is the Records/Library and Archives Manager at Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania.

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Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church
1700 South Main Street
Goshen, IN 46526
Telephone: (219) 535-7477
Fax: (219) 535-7756
E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu
Web Site www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/
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Seeking a Home:
Entering and Leaving Manitoba

Mennonite immigrants from the USSR arrive in Altona, Manitoba, 1923.
Photo credit: Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Man.

by Adolf Ens

Almost 7,000 Mennonites arrived in Manitoba from Russia between 1874 and the end of the decade, among the first beneficiaries of Louis Riel's[1] initiative to create a new province. During the 1890s and early 1900s, relatives of the first settlers and others from Russia joined them in Manitoba, or continued on westward to pioneer in the Northwest.

The areas reserved for bloc settlement by Mennonites in Manitoba were meanwhile filling up. Sons and daughters of the pioneer families, seeking to become farmers on their own, began to look westward. The leadership of the Manitoba communities negotiated with Ottawa—Saskatchewan did not become a province until 1905—to found new bloc settlements, first between the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers in 1895, and then in the Swift Current area in 1904. Smaller groups moved into southern Alberta and even into the interior of British Columbia.

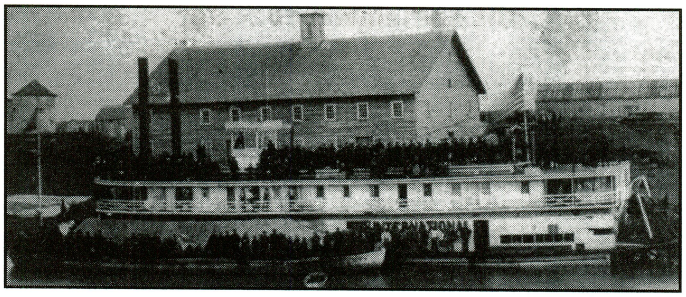
The urgent need felt by the Liberal government of Wilfrid Laurier to fill the "empty" prairies with European agriculturists led to a widespread policy of bloc settlement. This allowed pioneers to help each other get started on their farms. It created some continuity with life in the old country and made it easier to establish community structures, school and church. At the same time, it encouraged the perpetuation of the language and culture of the immigrant community.

As more and more of these immigrant communities began to dot the prairies, older Canadians from the east increased their efforts to "Canadianize" them. Some viewed with alarm the fact that as few as a third of them were of British extraction. Protestant missionaries were concerned to Christianize "sectari-

ans," like Mennonites and Doukhobors, as well as Orthodox and Catholic groups from Eastern Europe. In D'Alton McCarthy's words, the goal was "to make the people Manitobans and Canadians, not French or Mennonite, nor Poles or Polish Jews."

In Manitoba, Ontario, anglophone pressure led to the abolition of French as an official language in government and schools in 1890. A six-year legal and political battle resulted in the famous Laurier-Greenway compromise, allowing Manitoba schools to be bilingual. Where at least ten children in a rural district spoke a language other than English as their mother tongue, school could be conducted in that language along with English.

The passions of World War I disrupted this gradual process of assimilation. The Mennonites had been assured at the time of their immigration that Canada's laws provided for exemptions from military service for pacifist groups like Quaker, Dunkards and themselves. However, as the war dragged on, they faced increasing pressure to participate in purchasing Victory Bonds and making special donations to the Red Cross. Their German language newspapers were suspended from publication. The bilingual provision, the School Act, was abolished in 1916. And finally, as the war ended, their church-run schools were forcibly replaced with government-regulated public schools flying the Union Jack.



The first boatload of Mennonites from Russia arrive at The Forks (the junction of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers), Winnipeg, August 1, 1874.
Photo credit: Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Man.

For many of the Mennonites, these developments had too many parallels with their experience in Russia fifty years earlier. They feared for the future and began to search for alternative places to settle. The Quebec government was sympathetic, but agricultural land there was scarce. The southern states were inviting but could not promise exemption from military service. In the end it was Mexico and Paraguay that offered the right terms.

The governments of both countries assured Mennonites of the right to their own schools, the free exercise of the faith, and exemption from military service. Large blocks of land could be purchased fairly cheaply from huge ranches. Agricultural conditions were not ideal, but appeared manageable.

In 1922 the first trainload of emigrants left for Mexico from the station in Altona. The move to Paraguay was delayed until 1926. By 1927, almost 8,000 Mennonites had left Canada for Latin America, almost 5,000 of them from Manitoba. They went disappointed, but not bitter. Many retained their Canadian citizenship and registered their children with the Canadian government.

In Russia, World War I brought other consequences for the Mennonites who had remained there. The Communist revolutions of 1917 and the overthrow of the Imperial government brought about enormous upheavals throughout the realm. Civil war, anarchist bandits, typhoid epidemic, crop failure might have been enough to drive them from their adopted Russian homeland. When economic, social, cultural and religious oppression were added, many decided to leave.

Ironically then, just as some 8,000 were in process of leaving the country, a new wave of Mennonite immigrants from the Soviet Union began arriving in 1923. Equally ironical: in 1919 the Canadian gov-

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ernment, under tremendous public pressure, issued an order-in-council identifying Mennonites as "Undesirables because, owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of living and methods of holding property, they are unlikely to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time." By the time the first refugees from the USSR began arriving four years later, there was widespread support for them and they were seen once again as a "desirable class of settlers."

Obviously, the departure of 8,000 of the most uncompromising settlers and the arrival of 20,000 new immigrants, who saw Canada as a haven of freedom from atheistic communism, greatly altered the character of the Canadian Mennonite community. However, the severity of the great economic depression of the 1930s and the renewed anti-German and anti-pacifist attitudes in the Canadian public, slowed the process of assimilation. Among some, indeed, the threat to faith and future was severe enough that a second wave of emigration to Latin America followed in the late 1940s. Again, there was countervailing immigration of new refugees from the USSR. The numbers involved in both of these movements were much smaller than they had been in the 1920s.

Beginning with the 1950s, Canada has experienced a small but steady trickle of reverse immigration from Mexico and Paraguay. Some of these "returning" Mennonites have joined the labor force in Winnipeg and in southern Manitoba towns. Others have resettled in the very villages, which their grandparents vacated in the 1920s.

1. Riel was a prominent leader of the Metis in Manitoba. Metis are descendants of marriages between French fur traders and indigenous spouses. In 1870 Riel formed a provisional government in Manitoba after the end of the Hudson Bay Company's charter. The Canadian parliament accepted his proposal to create a new, self-governing province. This was in contrast to the rest of the Canadian Northwest Territory that was governed by an appointed governor.

This article was first published in a commemorative special insert in the Winnipeg Free Press, *July 24, 1999, and was prepared by the Steinbach Hanover Historical Society and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Reprinted with permission.*

—Adolf Ens is a professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

Fall Meeting of Casselman Historians

The focus of Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians this year is the family and church of two Amish Mennonites of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Jacob (Yockley) Miller (1754-1835) and his son, Benedict Miller (1781-1837). Jacob's father, John (Hannes, Crippled John) arrived in America via the ship Phoenix in 1749. His eleven children, including Jacob, were born in Berks County, Pennsylvania. John and his wife, Magdalena, as well as Jacob, pioneered in Somerset County. Later, Jacob and his wife, Anna (Stutzman), pioneered in Tuscarawas County (Sugar Creek), Ohio, while Benedict remained in Somerset County because of the call of the church to the ministry.

The program of the annual meeting includes input by Joe Horner, West Liberty, Ohio, on the Berks County to Somerset County experience; David I. Miller, Irwin, Ohio, on Jacob Miller's move to and life in Tuscarawas County; Joanna Miller and Ruth Miller Yoder, Grantsville, Maryland, on Benedict as a community leader; and Dale Yoder, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, on Benedict as a church leader. Thirteen of Benedict's children had families and are featured in a series of biographical sketches to be presented by respective descendants. A Saturday morning tour visits local historical Miller sites in Elk Lick Township, Somerset County.

The meeting is to be held at the Maple Glen Mennonite Church on September 15-16, 2000, with sessions on Friday evening (beginning at 7:00 p.m.) and Saturday morning and afternoon. The bus tour is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. Saturday. The Maple Glen Church is located on Dorsey Hotel Road, one mile north of Grantsville.

A program flier is available by writing or calling the Casselman Historians. Mailing address: PO Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536. Telephone: 301-895-4488. E-mail: abcdefor@juno.com.

Katharina Hiebert: Manitoban Pioneer Midwife

by Regina Doerksen Neufeld

Katharina Hiebert (1855-1916): a "ray of hope . . . Day and night, summer and winter." Photo Credit: Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Man.

Katharina Hiebert came from the Bergthal Colony, Imperial Russia. She was an attractive woman, with dark, brown hair.

In 1875 Katharina married Jakob Hiebert, a widower 22 years her senior. Jakob's daughter, Helena, was only two years younger than her stepmother. Helena and Katharina became the best of friends.

Four months after their wedding, Katharina, with her husband and family, emigrated to Canada. They settled south of modern-day Niverville, on Section 18-74E, the village of Schantzenburg.

Jakob and Katharina made it through the first bitterly cold Manitoba winter. Their first crop was devoured by a plague of grasshoppers. In the fall of 1876 they moved into their new frame home.

Medical Care

Katharina Hiebert was keenly interested in helping the sick. Already in her first winter there were desperate demands for a midwife. To English, French and Mennonites alike, she became their ray of hope.

Husband Jakob Hiebert was extremely lonely in this wild, mosquito infested prairie.

Katharina was hungry for knowledge—what to do in case of infections? Broken bones? What herbs were good for what? Katharina ordered medical books from Germany and Elkhart, Indiana.

Katharina roamed the woods and meadows, collecting herbs—Swedish bitters, chamomile, and thyme. She tried different recipes—some given her by a Native woman.

Katharina's first baby was born in 1876. In 1878 her second daughter was born. When stepdaughter Helena, Mrs. Johann Loeppky, died in childbirth, it was heartbreaking. Katharina herself was nursing her third child—a boy, Peter.

Life had to go on. Almost every day somebody called for Katharina. She took her own babies along in the early years of midwifery.

Bedside Manner

Katharina visited many homes where she felt their misery and poverty. She became aggressive in advising and instructing—boldly correcting men who were abusive to their wives.

On one occasion the wife had just delivered her baby. The husband opened the door and brought in the cow, demanding she milk it. Katharina told him where to go! Katharina gave the wife instructions to rest in bed and made sure her husband was present at the time.

When she went to a poverty stricken home she took sheets, baby blankets, extra clothes and even food.

In one case, twins were to be born—the babies were in a twisted position. No doctors were available. Katharina did not hesitate to go to her "Higher Help." She stepped into the winter night and cried to God for help! When she came back, God had performed the impossible. The babies were born without further complications.

A neighbor, Peter Kehler, recalled many times that an anxious father galloped up the driveway. The next sight was Katharina roaring down the road in her buggy, sitting in the middle of the seat to balance it out, urging her greys to move faster. The soon-to-be father was left to fend for himself.

Day and night, summer and winter, she was called from home, tending the sick. She never charged for her services.

In those early pioneer years epidemics were a constant scourge, diphtheria and typhoid were deadly killers.

Retirement

Tragically Katharina developed breast cancer. Her entire breast was a big open sore.

Her husband was determined not to lose her. He brought here to a Native woman, famous for her healing power. Poultices made from herbs and bark were applied. The treatments were successful.

Katharina's husband passed away in 1906 when she was only 51 years old. She was extremely busy as a midwife. She died in 1916.

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—Regina Doerksen Neufeld, a granddaughter of Katharina Hiebert, is a retired teacher from Niverville, Manitoba.

I Wish I'd Been There

Readers respond to the question: What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and why?

I Wish I'd Been There: Negotiating with Ottawa

by Peter Dyck

Yes, indeed, I wish I'd been there when David Toews negotiated in Ottawa with the Canadian government and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company (CPR) for immigration of Mennonites from Russia.

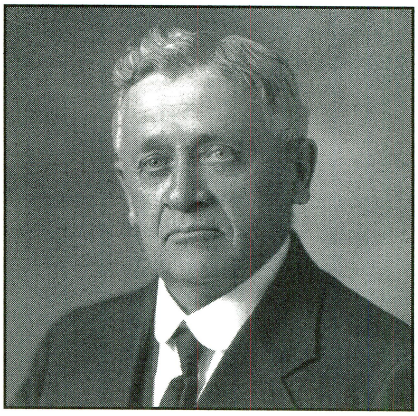
David had been a boy of twelve in my community in Russia when his family followed the misguided Claas Epp in 1880 to the east to meet the return of the Lord. (See *The Great Trek* by Fred Belk.) When his parents realized that they had made a big mistake, they left the visionary Epp and immigrated to Kansas. Knowing no English, children in school made fun of David, singing, "Dutchman, dutchman, belly full of straw, can say nothing by ja, ja, ja!" Little did they know what was in that boy. He not only learned the English language, but he became a teacher, a minister, and the founder of what is today Rosthern Junior College in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Meanwhile Communism had come to far-away Russia and Mennonites wanted to leave. The United States closed its doors, but the Canadian doors were open, thanks to the efforts of Toews and his good relationship with the Prime Minister of Canada, William Lyon Mackenzie King. This good news was offset by the bad news that there was not money for transportation. Toews negotiated with the CPR to bring the Mennonites over on credit. When asked who would guarantee that the money would be repaid, he didn't know. When asked how many people he was talking about, he was unable to give a precise figure. Understandably no deal could be struck under those circumstances.

But Toews would not give up. He went back to Ottawa, and this time when asked who would guarantee that the loan would be repaid, he responded, "I guarantee it!" And nobody laughed, although they all knew that he was poor as a church mouse. They also knew by this time what kind of man he was, and that he could be trusted.

The ships began bringing the Mennonite immigrants to Canada in 1923 and stopped in 1930 when the "iron curtain" came down, making further leave from Russia impossible. Over 20,000 of us, including my family, had the great fortune of leaving the land of terror.

It became the lot of my brother-in-law, C. F. Klassen, to collect that enormous travel debt of over two million dollars. Our people had not only come to Canada with nothing, but soon after arrival the country was plunged into the Great Depression of the 1930s. It took Klassen 25 years to collect the entire travel debt, but at last the day came when J. J. Thiessen, the man who ordained me, was able to go to the old and tired David Toews with the good news. "The entire travel debt and all the interest has been repaid," he said. At first Toews would not believe it. He chided



David Toews personally guaranteed that the enormous travel debt would be repaid—and lived to see the day.
Photo Credit: Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

Thiessen, saying that they were all sorry for him, knowing that he had given his word that the debt would be paid and that he couldn't die until it was. When Thiessen cupped his hands to the ears of the hard-of-hearing dear brother and repeated the good news once more, David Toews sat back in his rocker and with tears soaking his beard, kept saying again and again, "Gott sei Dank!" Thank you, God.

—Peter J. Dyck, at home in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, is well known as a storyteller and advocate of Mennonite Central Committee.

I Wish I'd Been There: Protesting Slavery

by Elaine Sommers Rich

I wish I'd been present in Germantown, Pennsylvania, on April 18, 1688, when the first anti-slavery protest in the New World was signed. Who signed the document? What did it say? For whom was it written? How was it received?

The four signatories were Gerrit Hendricks, Derick op den Graeff, Francis Daniel Pastorius, and Abraham op den Graeff. All had come to Penns Woods a mere five years earlier, three of them on the *Concord* and Pastorius on the *America.* As a grade school child, I learned at least some of the names of signers of the Declaration of Independence, written a century later than this document (John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson). Why did I not learn about these four signers of the document against slavery?

All four remembered well the persecution they had recently experienced in Europe. Gerrit's father had had two cows confiscated "because he persisted in attending Quaker meetings." The men were Quakers, but their immediate forebears, e.g., Grandmother Grietjen, were Dutch Mennonites. Indeed Grandfather Herman had been a delegate to the meeting at Dordrecht in 1632 when the famous Dordrecht Confession of Faith was adopted.

Francis Daniel Pastorius held a doctorate in law. He had attended several German universities. He spoke and wrote Dutch, German, English, Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. Later, in 1691, he became the first mayor of Germantown, and in 1701, the first schoolteacher. Why in my American history classes did I never learn about this remarkable man?

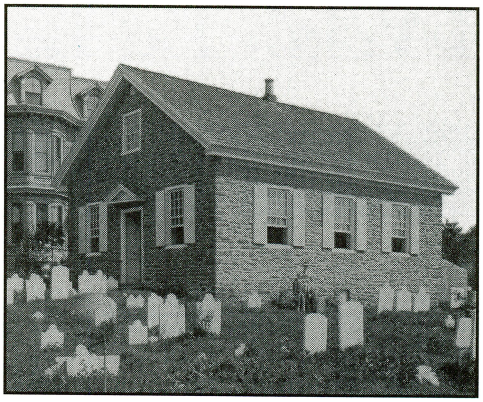
Probably the anti-slavery document was formulated and signed in the home of another immigrant, Tunes Kunders, a dyer of blue cloth, in whose home the first meetings for worship were probably held.

I have read the anti-slavery declaration. It is simply an application of Jesus' counsel to "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." Following are some of the statements in modernized spelling: "There is a saying that we should do to all men like as we will be done ourselves, making no difference of what generation, descent, or color they are. And those who steal or rob men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? . . . But to bring men hither, or to rob and sell them against their will, we stand against."

They were writing to their brothers and sisters in the faith who owned slaves. "This is to the monthly meeting held at Richard Worrells."

Continuing, "We know that men must not commit adultery, but some do commit adultery in others, separating wives from their husbands and giving them to others; and some sell the children of those poor creatures to other men. Oh! Do consider well these things, you who do it. Would you wish to be done in this manner? Is this done according to Christianity?" I find their words eloquent and powerful!

What happened to this protest? Two months later the quarterly meeting at Philadelphia said it was "so weighty that we think it not expedient to meddle with it here." They passed it on to yearly meeting, which also refused to adopt it, saying they (again, spelling modernized) "adjudged it not to be so proper for this meeting to give a positive judgment in the case, it having a general relation to other parts, and therefore, at present, they forbear it."



The Germantown meetinghouse, built 1770.
Photo credit: John F. Funk Photo Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

In other words, contemporaries of the signatories rejected and ignored their heartfelt protest against slavery. It took another two centuries, after John Woolman, after the Abolitionists, after a terrible and unnecessary civil war, for slavery to be abolished on this continent.

Sometimes, when I am tempted to grow weary working with small minorities of people on peace and justice issues, I remember the 1688 Germantown Declaration against Slavery and am encouraged to continue. I wish I'd been there when it was signed.

[I acknowledge the following sources: *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania* by William I. Hull, *Pastorius* by Marion Dextor Learned, and *Maintaining the Right Fellowship* by John L. Ruth.]

—Elaine Sommers Rich is a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, and writes a regular column for the ***Mennonite Weekly Review.***

A German Mennonite Affirmation of Jochen Klepper in Nazi Germany

by Gerlof Homan

In 1941 the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* (Christian Congregational Calendar), an annual publication of the South German Mennonite Conference, published a poem by the well-known German Christian writer and poet, Jochen Klepper.[1] However, because of his marriage to a Jew, Klepper had been declared *persona non grata* by the Nazis. In the 1930s and during World War II, German Mennonites did not distinguish themselves by their opposition to the Nazi regime and Germany's war against her neighbors and other nations. However, publication of this poem could be considered an affirmation of a German who in the eyes of the Nazi regime had disgraced himself and his "race" because of his marriage. This article will discuss the poem's author, the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender*, and its 1941 editor, Abraham Braun.

Jochen Klepper

Jochen Klepper was born in 1902 to a Lutheran minister and his wife in Beuthen located in the former German province of Silesia, an area that since 1945 has become part of Poland. Upon finishing gymnasium, Jochen attended the University of Breslau (now called Wroclaw) where he studied theology. However, he did not finish his studies and decided to embark upon a radio and literary career. In Wroclaw he worked for a local radio station and in 1931 moved to Berlin. Here he was offered a position by the radio station, *Berliner Funk*, and was also employed by the Ullstein publishing house. However, in June 1933, he was dismissed from his radio position and in September 1935, by Ullstein. The reason for his dismissals was his marriage in 1931 to a Jew, Johanna Stein. Johanna, or Hanni as she was more commonly referred to, was a widow with two daughters, Brigitte and Renate or Reni.[2]

Anti-Semitism was an integral part of National Socialism's "ideology." While anti-Semitism could be found in many parts of Europe and the New World, in National Socialist Germany it became official policy enacted into law. In the 1930s a host of anti-Jewish measures were issued to make life unbearable and miserable for German, and later, Austrian and Czech Jews.

National Socialist anti-Semitism affected Jochen Klepper in different ways. Not only was he dismissed from his positions, but he also experienced obstacles in his efforts to publish his writings when in March 1937, he was dismissed from the state literary office.[3] This office granted permits to publish manuscripts. All of this came at a time when Klepper reached a period of considerable literary productivity. One of his most important works at this time was the historical novel *Der Vater* (The Father),[4] a fictionalized biography of the Prussian King Frederick William I (1713-1740). In it Klepper depicted the king as a prototype of a *Gottesknecht* (servant of God), but also as an autocrat and father who forced his subjects to wear the uniform of duty and faith. To him Frederick William was the ideal Protestant Prussian ruler who founded his reign on the God-sanctioned authority of the father and embodied three ideals: family, the state and the church. No doubt, some of these values had Nazi appeal. The book, published in early 1937, sold very well and helped Klepper establish his literary reputation.[5] However, it did not prevent him from being excluded in March of the same year from the state literary office. Klepper's publications were considered "unfit" to influence the "spiritual and cultural development" of Germany. He was now prevented from publishing his Christian poems. Klepper appealed his case, and in December 1937, even wrote to Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, signing his letter with a "Heil Hitler." Nazi officials finally relented and, although sometimes delaying their decisions, permitted publication of all his poems in the next few years. Klepper felt that especially the popularity of *Der Vater* had influenced this decision. He concluded that he stood under the "protection of his book."[6]

In spite of the harassment and persecution of the Jews, the Kleppers did not believe that it was urgent to leave the country. It is not clear why they did not do so. Was it fear of losing Hanni's considerable property? Did Jochen feel, in spite of everything, some loyalty to Germany? Was he reluctant to give up his social and cultural status? After all, in spite of everything, his home in 1939-1940 was still one of the most "stimulating" centers of

Neujahrslied
(New Year's Song)

By Jochen Klepper

(Translated by Dr. James Vanderlaan, Illinois State University)

You, who in his hands holds time,
Lord, take this year's burden, too
And change it into blessing.
Now that yourself have shown
The center firm in Jesus Christ,
Lead us toward the goal.

Since everything which man begins,
Fades away before his eyes,
You alone perfecter be!
The years alone which you have given us,
Should your goodness not direct us,
Become outmoded just like garments.

Who here can stand before you?
Humankind, its day, its work, disappears:
Only you alone will stay.
Only God's year lasts forever,
Turn everyday, therefore to you,
For we are drifting in the wind.

Man senses nothing of his limit,
Yet you remain the one you are,
In years without end.
We travel forward through your anger,
And still the fountain of your grace
Streams into our empty hands.

And these gifts, Lord alone
Let worth and measure be,
Of days we spend in guilt.
Let time by them be reckoned;
What we neglected, where we failed,
May that not appear before you.

poetry in all of Germany.[7] Did he think that God would lead him safely through his ordeal? Or did the Kleppers feel safe after the Christian baptism of Hanni and Reni?[8] However, Christian Jews were not immune from Nazi persecution. Whatever their reason for staying in Germany, the Kleppers did consider it imperative for their daughter Brigitte to leave. She left on May 9, 1939, for England. Her departure was "a farewell, and end so without fulfillment," Klepper lamented in his diary.[9] Both girls could have left with a youth transport to England, but Jochen was unable to see both of them go; that was too much for the parents, he stated.[10] Yet, in 1940 the Kleppers did try to have Reni emigrate to Switzerland, but Swiss authorities were unwilling to grant her a permit.

In September 1939, a few months after Brigitte's departure, war broke out in Europe. The war would make the German Jews' position more precarious and later also those of many other European Jews. They were now trapped.

Klepper felt the war against Poland to recover Upper Silesia and the so-called Polish Corridor was justified and showed no sympathy for the suffering Poles and later Danes, Norwegians and others who had become victims of the Nazi juggernaut. However, he did express serious reservations about Germany's victories.[11] In December 1940 Klepper was drafted into the German army. He was elated over his draft call. He envied "every man who is a soldier." War was something a man had to experience not as a civilian but as a soldier, he felt.[12] He also believed that his position in the German army would provide extra protection for Hanni and Reni. Actually his draft notice had been an error. Germans married to Jews were not to be drafted.[13]

Initially Klepper served with a horse transportation unit and was later part of an infantry supply division in Bulgaria, Poland and Russia.

He did not see actual combat, but did observe the miseries of war in Russia. Apparently, he was not moved by the war's destructive force. In fact, he enjoyed military life and its camaraderie. It was Hanni who had to remind him of the inhumanity and horror of the Russian campaign. She wanted him home as soon as possible.[14] Her wish was fulfilled. In August 1942 Klepper was discharged and sent home because his marriage had disqualified him for military service.[15]

In August 1941 Renate, who was now nineteen years of age and soon had to wear the yellow star, had been forced to work in the defense industry in Berlin. Would she soon be deported? In October 1941, a very concerned Klepper decided to see Wilhelm Frick, the minister of the interior and admirer of his book, *Der Vater*. Frick assured Klepper that Renate most likely would not be deported and would be allowed to go to Sweden, but he could not exempt her from wearing the yellow star.[16] In spite of this reprieve, Klepper remained very pessimistic; "step by step" the "catastrophe" descended upon them, he concluded. Even if Germany were to lose the war, the Jews were doomed.[17]

For some time, Klepper had been trying to obtain a Swedish visa for Reni. Finally, on December 5, 1942, the Swedish government granted her one. On the same day the Kleppers received news about the birth of their first grandchild in England. Again Klepper called upon Frick to help. Frick informed him that he could not help him. On December 9-10 Klepper saw Adolph Eichmann of the Reich Security Main Office, the agency responsible for the administration of the "final solution." Eichmann's office supervised the deportation of the Jews, but he refused to grant the visa. On the evening of December 10, 1942, Klepper, Hanni and Reni committed suicide by opening the gas valve in the kitchen of their home. The destruction of German Jews, Klepper concluded, had entered its final phase and there was no hope for Hanni and Renate. "Tonight we die together. Over us stands in the last moments the image of the blessed Christ who surrounds us. With this view we end our lives." With these words Klepper ended his diary.[18]

Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender and Abraham Braun

The *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* began publication in 1892 and had a circulation of around 2000.[19] It provided information on congregations in south Germany, France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Poland as well as articles on a variety of different subjects. Prior to 1933 it was not neutral in matters of the nation's political and military leaders and reflected the German Mennonites' total integration into the mainstream and surrender of opposition to military service. For instance, it had much praise for Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), the founder of the modern German state, as one of the "greatest statesmen of all times."[20] During World War I it published pictures and names of Mennonites fallen at the front who, it felt, had died a "hero's death." In addition, it showed pictures of leading military men such as Paul von Hindenburg and August von Mackensen.[21]

In the 1930s the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* remained neutral, too neutral according to one Nazi official.[22] In World War II it again published pictures and names of those fallen in battle, expressed sorrow over the Polish murder of German Mennonites in Schönsee, a Mennonite congregation near Gdansk, and joy over the return of countrymen to that part of Upper Silesia, which had been given to Poland in 1921 but was retaken in 1939. The *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* ceased publication in 1941, most likely a victim of the German war economy.[23]

In 1941 its editor was Abraham Braun. Braun was born in 1882 in Alexanderwohl, located in the Mennonite Molotschna colony in Russia. He was baptized in 1897 and in 1901 went with his parents to Siberia. After having completed his compulsory forestry service and study at a Bible school, Braun went to Berlin where he enrolled in the Allianz-Biblelschule in 1910. After completion of his studies, Braun remained in Germany. In 1920 he became secretary of a missionary society and in 1922 became head of German Mennonite Aid to assist Mennonites leaving Russia. In 1928 he became pastor of the Mennonite congregation of Ibersheim-Eppstein-Ludwigshafen. Here he stayed until his retirement in 1957. In the course of time Braun served on numerous committees and boards and in 1933 became editor of the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender*. In the post-World War II era he became very active in the Mennonite World Conference and became a bridge builder among European Mennonites. He died in 1970. During his long life and ministry Braun embodied genuine Mennonitism, and was an inspiration for many. Among the latter was his Canadian grandnephew, Mennonite historian, Abraham Friesen, to whom Braun became the grandfather he never had.[24]

A more thorough and comprehensive study of German Mennonites in the Nazi era is needed. However, it is safe to conclude German Mennonites did not oppose the Nazi regime. Some joined the Nazi Party and many served in the German war machine. No Mennonites were listed among Germans who refused military service in World War II. We do not know how many became war casualties. Although some Mennonites were briefly incarcerated for aiding Jews or for other reasons, none suffered in concentration camps.[25] Braun did not sympathize with the Nazi movement. He kept political discussions out of the pages of the

Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender and dared to defy the local *Gauleiter*. He also tried to persuade, unsuccessfully, his sons from enlisting in the German armed forces. His son, Jakob, was killed on the eastern front in March 1944.[26]

Publication of Klepper's poem, *Neujahrslied* (New Year's Song) was not necessarily an act of courage or defiance. The poem had been published as early as January 1, 1938. Klepper completed the poem in late 1937 and submitted it to the state literary office for permission to publish. The poem was based on Psalms 90 and 102 and Deuteronomy 28:1-6. Initially, the reaction of the state literary office was very negative. The "censor" concluded the poem conveyed an "absolutely Jewish" disposition. Today's Germany needed a *Neujahrslied* that did not fall back on the "slavish attitude of the Psalms," he alleged. However, Klepper's special appeal to Goebbels resulted in final approval to publish the poem.[27]

We do not now if Braun knew about Klepper's ordeal. We may assume he did since Klepper was well known in German Christian circles at this time. Publication of *Neujahrslied* at a time the Nazi regime was heavily bearing down on European Jews was not an illegal act. However, its publication in the *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* can be construed as a subtle kind of affirmation of a German poet who was facing the storm. It was "exactly something Braun was capable of doing, according to Friesen.[28]

1. *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender*, 1941. Hereafter cited as *CGK*. I would very much like to thank my brother, Rev. B. K. Homan, Enhuizen, the Netherlands, for calling my attention to the publication of this poem in *CGK*.

2. There are many biographies of Klepper. Among them are: Rita Thalmann, *Jochen Klepper: Ein Leben swischen Idyllen und Katastrophen* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1978) and Ilse Jonas, *Jochen Klepper: Dichter und Zeuge* by Ilse Jonas (Berlin: Christlicher Zeitschriftenverlag, 1967). The most recent one, based upon heretofore unpublished materials, is by Martin Wecht, *Jochen Klepper: Ein christlicher Schriftsteller im jüdischen Schicksal* (Düsseldorf: Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland, 1998). The best source for Klepper's life and work during the 1930s and 1940s is his very extensive diary: *Unter dem Schatten deiner Flügel. Aus den Tagebücher der Jahren 1932-1942* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983). His dismissal is recorded on p. 282.

3. Klepper's problems with the *Reichsschriftskammer* (state literary office) are discussed in Ernst Reimschneider, *Der Fall Klepper: Eine Dokumentation* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1975), passim.

4. Jochen Klepper, *Der Vater: Roman eines Königs* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1937). There have been more editions since 1937.

5. Thalmann, *Klepper*, 92; Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 234.

6. Reimschneider, *Klepper*, 57ff.; Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 545.

7. Thalmann, *Klepper*, 253; Wecht to author, April 27, 1999.

8. Hanni was baptized in December 1938, and Renate in June 1940. Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 688, 699, 894.

9. Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 761, 765.

10. Wecht, *Klepper*, 224.

11. Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 789, 871-872, 877, 898.

12. Ibid., 925.

13. Ibid., 809, 932; Thalmann, *Klepper*, 287, 319, 321; Riemschneider, *Klepper*, 119. By Hitler's decree of April 8, 1940, many offspring of mixed marriages involving Jews and all Germans married to Jews were dismissed from the armed forces.

14. Klepper kept a very extensive diary during his short military career. It was published after the war under the title: *Überwindung: Tagebücher und Aufzeichnungen aus dem Kriege* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1958). Wecht sheds further light on Klepper's military career on the basis of Klepper-Hanni correspondence, Wecht, *Klepper*, 285.

15. Klepper, *Überwindung*, 225ff.

16. Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 972, 975.

17. Ibid., 1002.

18. Ibid., 981ff., 1032; Thalmann, *Klepper*, 372-380. Klepper had often considered suicide as an option. The earliest reference is June 23, 1933. He did not consider suicide a sin because such a deed did not offend the Holy Spirit. Klepper, *Unter dem Schatten*, 76-77.

19. *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 1:585.

20. *CGK*, 1892-1941, *passim*.

21. Ibid., 23 (1914): 145-146; vols. 23-27, *passim*.

22. Dietrich G. Lichdi, *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich. Dokumentation und Deutung* (Weierhof/Pfaltz: Mennonitischer Geschichtstverein, 1977), 62; Dietrich G. Lichdi, "The Story of Nazism and Its Reception by German Mennonites," Mennonite Life, 36 (March 1981): 24-31.

23. *CGK*, 49 (1941): *passim*; vol. 50 (1941): *passim*. Very interesting is *CGK* advertising, which offered i.a. "rum, cognac, arrack, tobacco and cigars."

24. Irmgard Hörner-Braun, "Abraham Braun," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, 1998, pp. 83-88; Abraham Friesen, *Historical Research in Anabaptist/Mennonite Tradition* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1994), 5ff.

25. Lichdi, *passim*. No German Mennonite is listed among conscientious objectors in: Norbert Haase and Gerhard Paul, *Die anderen Soldaten: Wehrkraftersetzung, Gerhorsams-Verweigerung und Fahnenflucht im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt a.m.: Fisher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995); Heidi and Albrecht Hartmann, *Kriegsverweigerung im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a.m.: Haag and Herchen, 1986); Karsten Bredemeier, *Kriegsverweigerung im Dritten Reich* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschft, 1991).

26. Abraham Friesen to author, June 6, 1999.

27. Wecht, *Klepper*, 163-164; Riemschneider, *Klepper*, 52-55.

28. Abraham Friesen to author, June 6, 1999.

New Treasures: Archives of the Mennonite Church

by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist

What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the archives during the past six months. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.

Aschliman, Kathryn A., Goshen, Indiana. Personal papers, 1950-1999, including student papers during her time at Goshen College and the Biblical Seminary, 1950-1959, on topics such as Christian education, Menno Simons, missions in India, moral character development, peace education, role of women in the church, and teaching science. Papers also include annual reports of the Goshen College laboratory kindergarten, 1959-1996, her annual faculty report to Goshen College, 1974-1996, and collected articles, writings and clippings by and about Aschliman, 1954-1999. She graduated from Goshen College with a bachelor of science in 1954, and from Goshen College Biblical Seminary with a master of religious education in 1959. She served as professor of education and director of the laboratory kindergarten at Goshen College, 1962-1996, and as professor emerita of education since 1996. 10 linear inches. Donor: Kathryn Aschliman.

Beyler, Clayton, 1918-1973. Correspondence of Clayton Beyler to Gladys Graber, September 1944-December 1946, when he served as a relief worker under Mennonite Central Committee, first in the Bengal floods in Calcutta, India, and then in Kaifeng, China. Also includes slides of the work as photographed by Beyler, 1944-1946, including trip by Beyler and Lawrence Burkholder to visit Mennonite missionaries in Dhamtari, India, in December 1944. 7 linear inches. Donor: Gladys (Graber) Beyler, Goshen, Indiana.

Charles, Howard H. and Miriam, Goshen, Indiana. Personal papers, 1940s-1998, nineteenth-century photographs, and a plain suit. Includes Howard Charles' articles and original manuscripts written for *Herald Teacher/Builder*, 1950-1984; class syllabi and notes as a professor of New Testament at Goshen College / Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 1947-1989; class notes as a student at Princeton, 1948 (Th.M.) and University of

Four generations of Coffman family, Dean's Studio, Harrisonburg, Virginia, circa 1904. (From oldest to youngest): Grandma Frances (Weaver) Coffman, 1825-1912 (right); daughter Mollie (Mary) Heatwole, 1857-1926 (back center); and daughter Nellie Suter, 1879-1952 (left) with daughter Blanche, 1903- (front center). Coffman raised a large family of six sons and six daughters, including church evangelist John S. Coffman. "Through all these years of homemaking and the rearing of a large family, which fell centrally upon the trying and often harassing period of the Civil War, she stood faithfully to her post as director and provider for the comfort of the family during the frequent and often prolonged absence of her husband [Bishop Samuel Coffman] in the Lord's work." Obituary, Gospel Herald, *December 12, 1912.*
Source: Miriam and Howard H. Charles Collection

Pakis Hospital, Indonesia, 1959, with a capacity of thirty-five beds. The medical board, which is sponsored by the Javanese Mennonite Church, employs sixty-five persons including four foreign staff (two from European Mennonite Mission Board and two from Mennonite Central Committee). Recently the archives received the MCC Indonesia Field Records, 1958-1993. Source: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Photograph Collection.

Edinburgh, 1958 (Ph.D.); and papers reflecting a wide variety of his involvements in the church, 1940s-1990s, such as teaching an adult Sunday school class at East Goshen Mennonite Church, serving on the pastoral team during the late 1960s and early 1970s, serving as pastor at Lititz Mennonite, Pennsylvania, in the 1940s, and providing interpretations on biblical texts in relation to various social issues like sexuality, speaking in tongues, and the Holy Spirit. The collection includes a four-generation photograph of Frances Coffman family, a portrait of Barbara Coffman, and a biography of Samuel Coffman. 48.75 linear feet. Donors: Howard H. and Miriam Charles.

Hostetler, John A., Goshen, Indiana. Collected items, 1940s-1998, including photographs and posters of Amish life, 1984-1989; phonograph recordings of "Folksongs of the Pennsylvania Dutch," 1940s; selected Hutterian documents in translation, 1975; and an inventory of the John A. Hostetler Collection, 1998 at Penn State University, Pennsylvania. 6 linear inches. Donor: John A. Hostetler.

International Voluntary Service, 1953- , Roderick MacRae, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Records, 1963-1996, reflecting MacRae's activities as a voluntary relief worker in Laos, 1963-1966 and at IVS headquarters in Washington, D.C., 1966-1968. Collection also includes materials collected by MacRae on IVS involvement in Cambodia and Vietnam during the 1960s, as well as annual reports, newsletters and documents of the ongoing activities of IVS from 1968-1996. 24 linear inches. Donor: Roderick MacRae.

Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, 1971- , Elkhart, Indiana. Records, 1977-1994, reflecting the work of three departments during these years. Atlee and Winifred Beechy, David Helmuth, Edgar Metzler, and Gordon Zook worked in the peace and social concerns department, 1980-1990. Ray and Lillian Bair and Robert Yoder worked in the stewardship department, 1977-1992. Gordon Zook and then Everett Thomas were the directors, 1982-1994. 5.25 linear feet. Donor: Everett Thomas, director.

"My first private duty patient, Bobby Crawshaw," writes Ida Brubacher (1890-1992), a registered nurse who received her degree from Passavant Memorial Hospital, Chicago, Illinois, in 1919. The archives recently received materials from the Mennonite Nurses Association, which was founded in 1942. Source: Ida Brubacher-Bauman Collection.

Marvin Newcomer on Flag Mountain, South Dakota, 1944. Newcomer writes about his CPS experience: "Late that afternoon [in 1946] I turned in the lane to that [home] farm on the hill. I was not the same boy that had left [in 1944 at the age of 22]. My life was enriched and enlarged by this experience."
Source: Marvin Newcomer Collection.

Mennonite Central Committee, 1920- , Akron, Pennsylvania. Records, 1944-1995, the bulk of which reflects five series of files, 1986-1994: workbooks, news releases, minutes of MCC executive committee and annual meetings, minutes of MCC USA executive committee and annual meetings, and personnel listings. All of these materials are on microfilm. Included on microfilm is also an earlier set of news releases, 1944-1970. Two other series of files, which are found on both microfilm and paper, are the field records of MCC Indonesia, 1958-1993 and MCC Mozambique /Swaziland, 1969-1995. 22 original microfilm reels (16mm), 22 duplicate microfilm reels (16mm), plus 5 linear feet. Donor: Irene Leaman, records/library and archives manager.

Mennonite Health Services, 1947- , Goshen, Indiana. Audiovisual records, 1971-1997, and some paper records, 1989-1992. The cassette tapes feature the early history and 25th anniversary of Mennonite Mental Health Services (MMHS), 1971-1973 and 1981; a symposium on mental health, 1972; a symposium on devalued persons and the church, 1981; Spanish language tapes on various health topics; and tapes of the National and Mennonite Health Assemblies, 1986, 1992, 1996-1997. The video tapes, 1988-1997, include the video *MHS: The Healing Community*, 1990-1991; video footage from Lebanon Community Hospital, Philhaven Hospital, Kings View Center, Schowalter Villa, Prairie View, and Eden Health Services, 1988-1997; videos of General Assemblies, 1991, 1993; and three videos of *The Prolonged Mentally Ill: A Congregational Issue*. Collection also includes some photographs and slides of several mental health hospitals, 1970s-1990s, and files of the MHS Soviet exchange program, 1989-1993. 6.25 linear feet. Donor: Wendy Rohn, office manager.

Mennonite Nurses Association, 1942- , Goshen, Indiana. Financial records, 1994-1996, including receipts, bank statements, and bankbooks, as well as correspondence on membership and projects. Financial records, 1994-1996. 5 linear inches. Donor: Dottie Kauffmann, treasurer.

Newcomer, Marvin, Goshen, Indiana. Papers, 1789-1999, including photographs, documents and the story of Newcomer's experiences in Civilian Public Service which included building a dam at Hill City, South Dakota, and working in the wards at the mental health hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, during World War II, 1944-1946. Collection also includes military documents on conscientious objectors in World War I, 1918-1919; sale bill of Jacob Y. Miller estate sale, Harrison Center, Elkhart County, 1874; and collected calendars, souvenir booklets, postcards, school commencement programs, and sample periodicals and books, 1789-1958. 15 linear inches. Donor: Marvin Newcomer.

North Central Conference of the Mennonite Church, 1920- , Mission Board, President Andrew Levi Glick. Records, 1935-1959, including incoming and outgoing correspondence of Glick, 1952-1959, in his capacity as president of the district mission board. Collection also includes older correspondence and reports of the mission board, 1935-1950, membership certificates, 1946-1948, for persons transferring membership into congregations belonging to the North Central Conference. 15 linear inches. Donor: Ervie Glick, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Stutzman, Dale, Goshen, Indiana. Photographs, slides and a T-shirt, 1944-1946, of Stutzman's involvement in Civilian Public Service as a smokejumper in Missoula, Montana, and as a dairy farm worker in Beltsville, Maryland. Collection also includes slides of Stutzman's involvement in Mennonite Youth Village, Michigan, 1957- , Goshen College, Indiana, 1950-1965, and Adriel School, West Liberty, Ohio, 1961-1964. 4 linear inches. Donor: Dale Stutzman.

—Stoesz has served as archivist since 1989.

Heritage and Information Centers

Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust
6133 Germantown Ave
Philadelphia PA 19144
215 843-0943; gmht@aol.com
Galen Horst-Martz, executive director

Hans Herr House Museum
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Willow Street PA 17584
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Illinois Amish Interpretive Center
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Edwin J. Stalter, president

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North Newton KS 67117-0531
316 283-1612;
rpannabe@bethelks.edu
Rachel Pannabecker, director

Menno-Hof
PO Box 701
Shipshewana IN 46565-0701
219 768-4117; mennohof@tln.net
Jerry Beasley, interim director

Mennonite Heritage Center
565 Yoder Rd
PO Box 82
Harleysville PA 19438-0082
215 256-3020;
http://www.mhep.org/;
info@mhep.org
Edith J. Landis, director

Mennonite Heritage Centre
600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
204 888-6781;
http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mhc/;
aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca
Alf Redekopp, archivist and interim director

Mennonite Heritage Museum
Kristine Schmucker
200 N. Poplar
PO Box 231
Goessel, KS 67053
316 367-8200
E-mail: mhmuseum@futureks.net
http://skyways.lib.ks.us/museums/goessel

Mennonite Heritage Village
PO Box 1136
Steinbach MB R0A 2A0
204 326-9661; mennovil@mb.sympatico.ca
Gary Snider, executive director

Mennonite Information Center (Ohio)
5798 County Road 77
PO Box 324
Berlin OH 44610-0324
330 893-3192;
http://pages.sssnet.com/behalt;
behalt@sssnet.com
Paul J. Miller, executive director

Mennonite Information Center (Pennsylvania)
2209 Millstream Rd
Lancaster PA 17602-1494
717 299-0954;
http://www.800PaDutch.com/mennctr.html;
E-mail: menninfctr@desupernet.net
R. Wesley Newswanger, director

Millbank Information Centre
PO Box 35
Millbank ON N0K 1L0
519 595-8037; E-mail: megzehr@perth.net
Glenn Zehr, committee chair

Pioneer Mennonite Adobe House Museum
501 S Ash St
Hillsboro KS 67063
316 947-3775
David F. Wiebe, director

The People's Place
PO Box 419
Intercourse PA 17534-0419

Valley Brethren-Mennonite Cultural Center
12149 Daphna Rd
Broadway VA 22815
540 896-2162; E-mail: proth@bridgewater.edu
Paul Roth, committee chair

Visitor Centre (telling the Mennonite story)
33 King St
PO Box 411
Saint Jacobs ON N0B 2N0
519 664-3518
Joe Snyder, manager

Recent Publications

Braun, Walter F., *A Biography of Peter A. 1890-1971 and Lena 1893-1991 Braun*. Sinclair, MB: Published by author. Order from author: PO Box 51, Sinclair, MB R0M 2A0.

Dawson, Jan, *The Story of Jacob and Neley*. Sun City, AZ: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: 10305 Hutton Dr, Sun City, AZ 85351-1130.

Farris, Donna Lee and Priticia G. Stigen, *Our Brunk Family Footsteps*. 1998. Order from: Pat Stigen, 17634 SE 196 Rd, Renton, WA 98058.

Friesen, Bert, *Kroeker Family Genealogy: the ancestors and descendants of Abram A. Kroeker and Elizabeth Nickel*. Winkler, MB: Kroekers of Winkler, 1998. Order from publishers: PO Box 1450, Winkler, MB R6W 4B4.

Friesen, Ronald, *John R. and Maria Friesen: Kleefeld Pilgrims of a Mennonite Tradition*. Beausejour, MB: Published by author, 1999. Order from author: PO Box 1186, Beausejour, MB R0E 0C0.

Hess, Phyllis, *Althouse*. Harrisburg, PA: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: 4801 Arney Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17111-3435.

Hess, Robert, *Genealogy of Heinrich (Henry) Eshelman 1707-1778*. Elizabethtown, PA: Published by author: 1998. Order from author: 1625 Campus Rd, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-8404.

Hildebrand, Marjorie, *Elm Grove Farm: the story of the ancestors and descendants of Bernhard G. and Helena Hildebrand 1679-1998*. Winnipeg, MB: Published by Anne Winter, 1998. Order from publisher: 771 Coventry Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3R 1B8.

Hoover, Mary, *The Milo Lehman Family*. Ephrata, PA: Published by author, 1998. $3. Order from author: 495 Camp Rodgers Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522.

John G. Warkentin Family. Order from: Edith Warkentin, PO Box 422, Cartwright, MB R0K 0L0.

Kelso, Nerissa, *Myers-Reeser: A Story of Two Families*. Coatesville, PA: Published by author. Order from author: 201 Martin's Corner Rd, Coatesville, PA 19320.

Kornelsen, Helen, *Our family tree: Cornelsen-Kornelsen, The Johann Jacob Kornelsen family 1884-1974*. Watrous, SK: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: PO Box 1194, Watrous, SK S0K 4T0.

Lapp, Alice Weber, comp., *Sarah Margaret Hostetter Weber: her story*. Akron, PA: Published by author, 1999. Order from author: Alice W. Lapp, 13 Knollwood Dr, Akron, PA 17501.

Miller, Roy J., *Miller family record 1919-1999*. Millersburg, OH: Published by author, 1999. $5. Order from author: 5362 County Road 19, Millersburg, OH 44654.

Musser, Richard, *Musser Family History*. Lancaster, PA: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: 227 Lepore Dr, Lancaster, PA 17602.

Remembering the Schulzes: From Pomerania to Prussia to Russia to Canada. 1999. Order from: Frank and Irma Gerbrandt, 1611 Landa St, Saskatoon, SK S7J 0P5.

Schrock, Samuel A., *Ancestors and Descendants of Samuel S. Schrock and Amanda Hochstetler*. Lagrange, IN: Published by author, 1999. Order from author: 2825 W 200 N, Lagrange, IN 46761.

Sensenig, D. M., *Elam W. Sensenig family history 1901-1999*. Ephrata, PA: Published by author, 1999. $9. Order from author: 1003 Sensenig Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522-8934.

Shaddinger, Anna Elizabeth, *Shaddinger Kin*. Springfield, VA: Published by Mrs. Richard Walsh, 1998. Order from publisher: 6704 Deland Dr, Springfield, VA 22152.

Stoesz, Arlene, *The Johann Stoesz family 1731-1992, a supplemented update 1992*. Butterfield, MN: Published by author, 1992. Order from author: RR 1 Box 193, Butterfield, MN 56120-9502.

Troyer, Mervin, *Descendants of Ezra J. Miller and Anna J. Christner*. Millersburg, IN: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: 10886 County Road 46, Millersburg, IN 46543.

Troyer, Mervin, *Descendants of Seth Troyer and Elizabeth Miller 1998*. Millersburg, IN: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: 10886 County Road 46, Millersburg, IN 46543.

Unruh, J. Timothy, *The Jacob C. and Elisabeth Bergen Unruh Family Record*. Rocklin, CA: Published by author, 1998. Order from author: PO Box 1034, Rocklin, CA 95677-1034.

Wadel, Lester M. Jr., *Descendants of Johann Peter Wedel, 1827-1901*. 1999. Order from: Doris Jean Sollenberger, 1430 Brechbill Rd, Chambersburg, PA 17201-8034.

Wiese, Luella Toevs, *Franz Toews and His Descendants*. Kailua-Kona, HI: Published by author, 1993. Order from author: Alii Lani D101, 75-6081 Alii Dr, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740.

Wiese, Luella Toevs, *The Neufeldts – Descendants of Gerhard and Oelsie Neufeldt*. Kailua-Kona, HI: Published by author, 1995. Order from author: Alii Lani D101, 75-6081 Alii Dr, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740.

Yoder, Ruben, *Descendants of Jacob J. Petersheim and Anna Yoder from 1853-1992*. Humansville, MO: Published by author, 1993. Order from author: RR 1 Box 470AA, Humansville, MO 65674.

More information on these books may be obtained from the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; 219 535-7418; e-mail: mhl@goshen.edu

Obituaries Online

Thirty-five volunteers in the U.S. and Canada are collaborating to place 53,000 obituaries online from the *Gospel Herald* (1908-1998), the *Herald of Truth* (1864-1907) and the *Gospel Witness* (1905-1907). Donald D. Kauffman, Tofield, Alberta, is coordinating the effort called the Mennobits Project for the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

Volunteers request photocopied pages, type the obituaries using a word processor, and send them by e-mail to Don Kauffman, project coordinator. Don formats the entries and uploads them to RootsWeb.com, a free web space host.

Over 12,000 obituaries have already been posted. The Mennobits web site is http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~mennobit/

To join the volunteer effort, or for more information, contact project coordinator, Donald D. Kauffman at dkauffma@telusplanet.net

Ralph Shetler, Hubbard, Oregon, launched an early phase of the project by creating an index of obituaries in the *Gospel Herald*. Later, harles Hunsecker at the Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, completed the index and published it in book form, *Complete Alphabetical Index of Obituaries in Gospel Witness & Gospel Herald 1905 to 1998*. This index may be purchased from the Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley, 4850 Molly Pitcher Highway South, Chambersburg, PA 17201, or by e-mail at chunseck@juno.com, for $25.00 plus $3.00 shipping and handling (In Canada add $1.50 for shipping and handling).

Mennobits Project coordinator, Donald D. Kauffman

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Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church
1700 South Main Street
Goshen, IN 46526
Telephone: (219) 535-7477
Fax: (219) 535-7756
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Tension on the Home Front:
One Mennonite Community's Experience During World War II

Looking west on Main Street in downtown Kalona. The hangings in effigy occurred in front of the hardware store which is the largest white building on the right. Photo credit: Franklin Yoder

by Franklin Yoder

Perhaps no event affected the Mennonite Church during the twentieth century as profoundly as World War II. At every level of the church, from churchwide organizations to local communities, World War II forced changes that fundamentally reshaped the church and its relationship to the surrounding society. Like almost all Americans, Mennonites suddenly found themselves in a maelstrom of events that pulled them in even when they preferred to remain on the fringes and

out of the spotlight.

Two circumstances that had allowed Mennonites and Amish living in the United States to maintain a low profile—the depression and isolationism—abruptly ended when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Public attitudes changed in a flash as the United States called on its citizens to support a war that to most people seemed morally right and political essential. Between 1941 and 1945, Mennonites and Amish pacifists faced many trying situations as patriotic citizens questioned the actions and loyalties of people they saw as cowardly, opportunistic, and disloyal.

In Johnson and Washington Counties in Iowa, home to a large Mennonite and Amish community, relations grew strained during the months following Pearl Harbor as Mennonite positions on nonresistance and conscientious objection increasingly drew the attention of local non-Mennonites. Events reached a breaking point in late May and early June of 1942 when vandalism and physical threats dramatically brought underlying tensions to the surface. A powerful explosion in the early morning of June 4 at the home of Daniel J. and Ida Fisher was heard all over Kalona, a town of several hundred people located in northern Washington County. In addition to the explosion at the Fisher home, several young men exploded dynamite near the homes of Lewis and Arvilla Yoder and one other Mennonite family.[1] While the explosions were frightening, they did only minor damage, breaking a large window in the home of Dan and Ida Fisher. During this same time, several area Mennonite church buildings near Kalona and Wellman were splattered with yellow paint.[2]

Dan and Ida Fisher. Photo credit: Franklin Yoder

Fisher, who lived in Kalona and was bishop of East Union Mennonite Church, had attracted attention because he worked closely with young Mennonite men facing the draft. Fisher had been serving the congregation at East Union for more than thirty years when World War II erupted. In his role as a minister, he frequently gave young men advice when they received draft notices and he met with local draft boards when they made it difficult for people seeking conscientious objector status. He had done similar work during World War I and knew what it meant to be singled out and labeled as unpatriotic and anti-American. He was known for his patience, optimism, and a soft-spoken style that contrasted with the stridency displayed by some ministers and bishops.

Lewis and Arvilla Yoder lived on a farm approximately one mile north of Kalona and were the parents of Duane R. Yoder, one of the first conscientious objectors drafted in Washington County. In addition to farming, Lewis Yoder had a thriving mule-trading business and

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occasionally dabbled in buying and reselling farms. He and Arvilla regularly attended East Union church but they did not hold important positions within that congregation. Yoder was well-known within the surrounding community and traveled more widely than most local farmers as he attended auctions in search of mules, horses, and bargains in land. He was known for his ability to match mules and create a team that was comparable in size, build, appearance, and temperament. Yoder had a reputation as a good farmer and businessman—he was someone who could make money.

In addition to the explosions and yellow paint, a third event meant to publicly humiliate and target Mennonites occurred in downtown Kalona. Three Mennonite men—including Dan Fisher and Lewis Yoder—were hung in effigy from the awning of a hardware store on Main Street. Paper signs attached to the figures identified them as Dan Fisher, Lewis Yoder, and Paul Snyder.[3] The effigy hangings took place during the night. When people arrived in Kalona for work or to do business, they could hardly miss seeing the stuffed caricatures of the three Mennonite men as they hung prominently in a busy part of town.

The figures hung undisturbed for several hours. Leroy Miller was a Mennonite businessman who owned an oil distributorship a few blocks east of the hardware store where the effigy hangings took place. By mid-morning, he realized the figures would not be removed unless someone complained. He went to the mayor and urged him to have them taken away. The mayor, who was not a Mennonite, had them cut down but whoever took them down did not remove them completely. Instead, they were laid in a vacant lot alongside another store a block to the west on Main Street. While not as visible as before, passersby could still easily see the figures as they lay sprawled a few yards off the street.

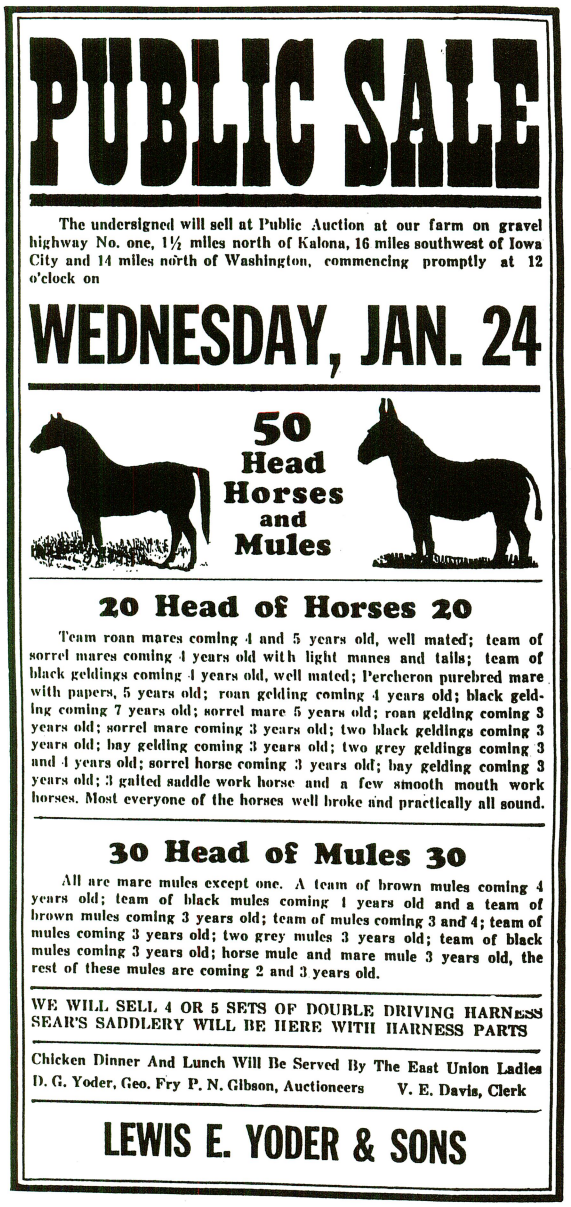
Lewis Yoder sledding on the ice, pushed by his son, Dale.
Photo credit: Franklin Yoder

A few days after these various acts of vandalism, five young men were arrested and charged with illegal use of fireworks. Since two of the men were scheduled for induction into the armed forces, they were allowed to plead guilty to disturbing the peace, pay a five-dollar fine, and enter the military. Each of the remaining men paid a $300 bond and was bound over to a grand jury on the fireworks charge.[4] All of the men arrested lived near Richmond, a small village a few miles south of Kalona. Richmond was in the center of an old rural settlement dominated by Czech Catholic farmers and it was home to Holy Trinity Catholic Church. The English River, which lay between Kalona and Richmond, marked an unofficial but very real line separating Amish and Mennonites to the north and Czech Catholics to the south. Both communities were insular, solidly rural, and ethnically and religiously homogeneous.

The young men responsible for the violence and vandalism had acted impulsively, probably had been drinking, and were looking for a way to vent their frustrations with pacifists. On the night of the bombings, they had been celebrating a friend's induction and imminent departure for the uncertainties and potential dangers of combat. Their actions were important, not because of who did what to whom, but for what they revealed about the social dynamics of the local community. Residents in small rural communities rarely air their disagreements openly, even when those disagreements are profound. The incidents of early June 1942 placed the issue of national service and loyalty at the center of the community, whether people wanted it there or not.

The events in Kalona exposed divisions in the community and embarrassed and humiliated local Mennonites and Amish. Mennonites and Amish who did business in Kalona found themselves in awkward circumstances, unsure of whom to confide in or to trust. Keith Yoder, the youngest son of Lewis and Arvilla Yoder, said his father went to town the day of the effigy hangings and returned home very shaken. Lewis Yoder had many friends in the Kalona business community but he now wondered who his friends really were.

Press coverage of the events of June 4 was uneven but it followed a clear pattern. On June 10, the *Iowa City Press Citizen* carried an Associated Press story with the



PUBLIC SALE

The undersigned will sell at Public Auction at our farm on gravel highway No. one, 1½ miles north of Kalona, 16 miles southwest of Iowa City and 14 miles north of Washington, commencing promptly at 12 o'clock on

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 24

50 Head Horses and Mules

20 Head of Horses 20

Team roan mares coming 4 and 5 years old, well mated; team of sorrel mares coming 4 years old with light manes and tails; team of black geldings coming 4 years old, well mated; Percheron purebred mare with papers, 5 years old; roan gelding coming 4 years old; black gelding coming 7 years old; sorrel mare 5 years old; roan gelding coming 3 years old; sorrel mare coming 3 years old; two black geldings coming 3 years old; bay gelding coming 3 years old; two grey geldings coming 3 and 4 years old; sorrel horse coming 3 years old; bay gelding coming 3 years old; 3 gaited saddle work horse and a few smooth mouth work horses. Most everyone of the horses well broke and practically all sound.

30 Head of Mules 30

All are mare mules except one. A team of brown mules coming 4 years old; team of black mules coming 4 years old and a team of brown mules coming 3 years old; team of mules coming 3 and 4; team of mules coming 3 years old; two grey mules 3 years old; team of black mules coming 3 years old; horse mule and mare mule 3 years old, the rest of these mules are coming 2 and 3 years old.

WE WILL SELL 4 OR 5 SETS OF DOUBLE DRIVING HARNESS SEAR'S SADDLERY WILL BE HERE WITH HARNESS PARTS

Chicken Dinner And Lunch Will Be Served By The East Union Ladies

D. G. Yoder, Geo. Fry P. N. Gibson, Auctioneers V. E. Davis, Clerk

LEWIS E. YODER & SONS

Left: Many farmers parked their expensive tractors during the depression and purchased mules and horses from dealers such as Lewis Yoder. As war broke out in Europe and as the depression eased, Yoder's annual mule and horse sale in 1940 was one of his last.
Credit: Franklin Yoder

headline "Report Tension Subsides in Wellman, Kalona Area."[5] The article described the explosions, the yellow paint on local churches, and it named the young men charged with the crimes of disturbing the peace and unlawful use of fireworks. The article made almost no editorial comment. The only reference to the moral or legal nature of this activity came from a quote at the very end of the article when John Owen, the county attorney for Washington County, stated that "any such community activity in wartime has more than local significance." The article also noted that one cause of the difficulties was a rumor that Dan Fisher had coerced young men in his church to claim conscientious objector status. Fisher, who was quoted in the article, said those rumors were "absolutely untrue."[6]

The vandalism, explosions, arrests, and other events of early June 1942 were never reported in the Kalona and Wellman newspapers, the *Kalona News* and the *Wellman Advance*. This lack of coverage was not surprising since local newspapers rarely reported controversies within the surrounding community. Local editors were often community boosters who were reluctant to tarnish their community's image by openly discussing acts of violence and vandalism. In addition to reporting major life events such as weddings and funerals, they usually wrote articles that focused on mundane and non-controversial activities such as visiting and weather. Their articles usually reflected the opinions of local leaders and editors rarely took unpopular minority positions. During World War II, the editors for both local papers solidly supported the national war effort.

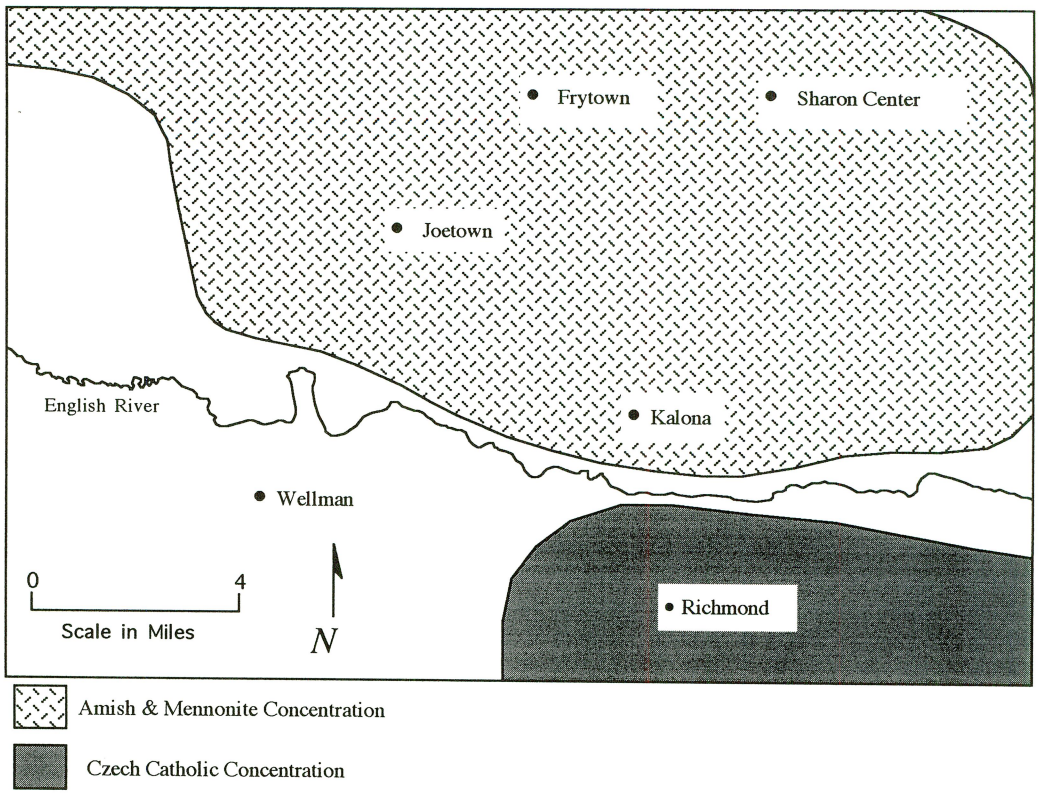
Like the local press, residents of the Kalona-Wellman area responded with public silence. Mennonites were in a difficult position and given their proclivity toward silent acceptance, their response was not surprising. They were reluctant to press the issue because to do so would have required public action, attracted unwanted attention, and opened them to charges of hypocrisy. How could they seek punishment of others when they were taught to turn the other cheek? How could they turn to the local sheriff when they rejected a basic premise of law enforcement that was the use of violence?

A largely silent public did not mean people had no opinions nor did it mean they condoned or condemned what had happened. Some people quietly supported the anti-Mennonite sentiment expressed in the vandalism and violence. The figures hanging on Main Street were not removed quickly which suggested sympathy for the perpetrators and a lack of indignation at what they had done. City officials, the owner of the hardware store, or other influential citizens could have removed the figures immediately but they chose not to. Their inaction caused a great deal of pain for persons such as Dan Fisher and Lewis Yoder who felt betrayed by people they had considered their friends.

If local officials and citizens had been asked about these events, they almost certainly would not have condoned them. However, it is also likely that while they would have said it was wrong to hang someone in effigy, explode bombs outside a home, and throw yellow paint on church buildings, many would have agreed with the nationalistic senti-

ments that motivated these young men. Most people were not pacifists and disagreed with Mennonite positions on war and national service. To varying degrees, they sympathized with the patriotic fervor that dominated the country.

Yet, just as some non-Mennonites implicitly endorsed what happened, others did not. A prominent Kalona businessman often visited Dan Fisher late at night during this time and they discussed tensions in the local community. This person would come to the back entrance so as not to arouse suspicion and on at least one occasion, he warned Fisher to leave town because people were going to harm him. Another businessman, who was not a Mennonite and who owned the house in which the Fisher family lived, pressured the sheriff to punish those responsible for the explosions. He stated that "This was not right. People should not be able to do this sort of thing." Father Boeckman, the Catholic priest in Richmond, was a friend of Dan Fisher and publicly denounced the actions of the young men, all of whom attended the Catholic church in which he served.



Kalona and Wellman ethnic and religious settlement patterns. Credit: Franklin Yoder

Occupational and economic divisions paralleled religious and ethnic differences and influenced local responses. Mennonites were not well integrated in the local business and political community and the reactions of local business and civic leaders reflected their absence. In 1942, most Mennonites lived on farms and only a few owned retail businesses in Kalona or Wellman. Town officials were not Mennonite and even though small towns seemed very much like the surrounding rural areas, the differences between town and country were important. Local rural Mennonites understood that towns, even towns as small as Kalona and Wellman, were less secure places than their rural communities. The isolated farmsteads where most Mennonites and Amish lived represented security and if a Mennonite family was surrounded by other Mennonites who owned neighboring farms—as most were—the countryside felt safe.

Outsiders took a more sympathetic view of Mennonites than did locals and they were more outspoken. An editorial in the *Des Moines Register* on June 17, 1942, praised local authorities for taking prompt action to "end the unfortunate revival of yellow paint and nuisance bombs" that targeted "our good Mennonite fellow citizens." The writer noted that Mennonites "came by their pacifism honorably" and briefly traced their history of nonresistance. The editorial condemned young men who committed acts of vandalism and rowdyism.[7]

Outside observers, who were removed from local antagonisms and were more objective, understood the broader threat of vigilantism and vandalism. In their minds, dynamite and yellow paint were more than a physical and psychological attack on individuals; they were a potential assault on basic freedoms. These persons may not have agreed with Mennonite positions on war and nonresistance but they realized the importance of protecting the rights of a minority of people who they believed were worthy citizens.

It is likely that local residents viewed Mennonites and Amish

with greater suspicion and even jealousy than did outsiders. The emotionally charged atmosphere in Kalona and Wellman caused larger issues of freedom of religious expression and the right to not bear arms to appear less important than at a state or national level. Constitutional and legal rights quickly faded in the local patriotic wartime fervor. In the eyes of many non-Mennonites, Mennonites and Amish were insular and appeared self-absorbed, a fact that encouraged suspicion and allowed accusations and assumptions to go unchallenged. The public silence of Mennonites and Amish may have conveyed a sense of aloofness and even arrogance that offended non-Mennonites.

These events were stark reminders of a fundamental difference between Mennonites and non-Mennonites in Kalona, Wellman, and the surrounding communities. While people always knew Mennonites and Amish were pacifists, war placed that issue squarely in front of the community. Whenever a local man was killed in the fighting, it was a vivid reminder to his family, friends, and neighbors that he had paid the ultimate price while others were shirking their duty. During years of peace, nonresistance lay beneath the surface of most conversations and interactions. It was there but seldom discussed or acknowledged. Now, as fighting raged overseas, it was an issue that few people ignored.

The violence and threats during the spring of 1942 revealed a great deal about Mennonites and the social and economic structures of their local rural community. Mennonite isolationism and their affinity for agriculture and farming made them easy targets and placed them at a political and social disadvantage. It is also revealing that the antagonists were also from a rural, closely-knit, religiously oriented community with social structures similar to those in Mennonite communities but with a very different view of national responsibility and patriotism. In what may have been efforts to assimilate, Czech citizens, along with many other ethnic groups, have often shown an almost fanatical loyalty to the United States during times of war. Local Czechs displayed this zeal and Mennonites and Amish felt its impact.

Within the broader context of World War II, the attacks in Kalona were not major events. When compared to the destruction of war, Nazi atrocities against Jews, and the suffering of people all over the world, hangings in effigy, explosions, and vandalism in Kalona and Wellman and the surrounding area were insignificant. Yet, these events shook the local Mennonite community in southeast Iowa. The bombings were violent and potentially dangerous and both the hangings in effigy and the bombings were psychologically intimidating.

People in a small community can tolerate only a limited amount of open conflict and disagreement. This is especially true when the disagreements are over issues as fundamental and intractable as religious belief, patriotism, and service to God and country. Today, Mennonites and Amish around Kalona and Wellman rarely discuss these events openly. To a casual observer, people appear to have forgotten those times. When asked, people are often reluctant to talk about issues they feel might reopen old wounds or unnecessarily stir feelings of animosity. However, when people do talk, they clearly remember what had happened and they still feel some of the fear they felt in 1942. Fifty years after the end of World War II, those memories continue to shape community dynamics. Mennonites, like everyone who lived during that time, have vivid memories of war and just as World War II shaped a generation of Americans, World War II also shaped a generation of Mennonites—even those living quietly on their farms and in their churches.

1. The third family was not identified but it may have been Paul and Katherine Snyder. I relied heavily on oral interviews to gather information, corroborating when possible with newspaper accounts. Over the past several years, I interviewed several people and I asked others specifically about these incidents. The people included Wallace Fisher, Ruth Fisher, Kenneth Hershberger, J. John J. Miller, Grace Tiessen, Dale E. Yoder, Donald D. Yoder, Duane R. Yoder, and Keith E. Yoder.

2. *Iowa City Press Citizen*, June 10, 1942.

3. Paul Snyder was an outspoken critic of military service and worked as a postal carrier in Kalona. Because he was a federal employee, he was often targeted by those who believed it was wrong for Snyder to criticize the organization that was also his employer. Also, Snyder's son had joined the Navy and Snyder's unhappiness with that decision was well known among local young people.

4. *Iowa City Press Citizen*, June 10, 1942.

5. *Iowa City Press Citizen*, June 10, 1942. Iowa City, a city of approximately 18,000 in 1942, is located seventeen miles north and east of Kalona. The *Press Citizen* served Johnson County and northern Washington County and carried national wire service stories. Its reporters would have felt fewer restraints about reporting local, unpleasant news.

6. *Iowa City Press Citizen*, June 10, 1942.

7. *Des Moines Register*, June 17, 1942.

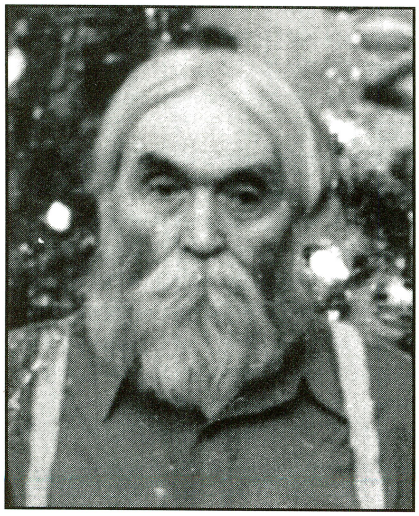
—Franklin Yoder is an academic advisor and teaches history at the University of Iowa. He is a member of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and attends Kalona Mennonite Church.

I Wish I'd Been There

Readers respond to the question: What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and why?

I Wish I Had Been There: John Schrag and the Kansas Mob, 1918

by James C. Juhnke



John Schrag: Mennonite Christ figure?
Photo credit: Mennonite Library and Archives

On November 11, 1918, the citizens of the small town of Burrton, Kansas, celebrated the end of World War I.[1] The celebration climaxed in a mob persecution of John Schrag, a Mennonite who had refused to buy war bonds. I wish I could have witnessed the event through the eyes of three men: John Schrag, Tom Roberts, and Charles Gordon.

John Schrag was a member of the Hopefield Mennonite Church. I would like to know what he was thinking and feeling when five carloads of Burrton men came eleven miles out to his farm to give him one last chance to buy war bonds. Was he terrified, defiant, or calm as he refused to salute the flag and carry it at the head of a parade? Did he nearly change his mind when they poured yellow paint over his head and rubbed it into his beard? Did he expect to die when they got a rope and marched him over to a tree to hang him?

Tom Roberts was the head of the Burrton Anti-Horse-Thief Association. I would like to know if he was in the group that got Schrag into town. At what point did Roberts decide that the mob was getting out of hand? Did Roberts always wear a gun? Would he actually have used his gun, as he threatened, to stop the mob from hanging Schrag? Was it Roberts who got Schrag into the city jail and called the Harvey County sheriff to come and take the victim to Newton to be cleaned up and kept in safety?

Charles Gordon was a young farm worker about to be drafted when the war ended. I would like to know how involved he was when the mob frenzy took hold. Was he on the fringes or at the center of things when the mob began beating and smearing Schrag? How accurate was Gordon's later testimony that Schrag was totally nonresistant—that he never raised a hand to defend himself and that a kind of halo appeared over his head in his humiliation? Was Gordon among the group that laid plans to come back that night, overwhelm the guards, and hang Schrag after all? Was it honesty or was it guilt that led Gordon later to describe Schrag as a kind of Christ-figure?

I have written and spoken many times about the mobbing of John Schrag. I wonder how my story would change if I could go back and live through the event myself—through the eyes of these and more participants.

1. James C. Juhnke, "John Schrag Espionage Case," *Mennonite Life*, July 1967, 121-122.

—James C. Juhnke is professor of history at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. He is the author of Vision, Doctrine, War, *the third volume in The Mennonite Experience in America series.*

I Wish I Had Been There

by E. Morris Sider

Around 1788, some residents of the northwest corner of Lancaster County separated from fellow church members to form the River Brethren, later known as Brethren in Christ. Most members of the new group had been Mennonites, including their leader, Jacob Engel.

Following conversion experiences in pietistic revival meetings, Engel and his fellow converts began

Group photograph of attendants at the General Conference of 1911 at Highland Church, Ohio. (The women at the extreme right are obviously visitors.)
Photo credit: Brethren in Christ Archives

to meet together, also in pietistic fashion, to talk about the spiritual renewal they had received. Continued discussion convinced them that baptism should be by immersion. Baptizing each other in this fashion became the catalyst to form a separate group.

This scene raises many questions–both religious and sociological–that I wish I had been there to ask and to explore the answers.

Why were the pietistic conversion experience and immersion baptism such strong impulses to separation? How much was the separation influenced by religious/spiritual conditions among Mennonites? Had church membership in their congregations become mainly a matter of family or ethnic identity? When Mennonites talked about conversion, what did they mean, and how did this contrast to the pietistic concept of conversion?

I wish I had been there to observe what dialogue took place between Mennonite leaders and those who were thinking about leaving the fellowship. Was there any attempt to accommodate opposing views, or, as frequently happens in such cases, were lines drawn and did they become more fixed with further discussion? And when the parting came, was it with goodwill–with the blessing of Mennonite leaders–or were feelings exacerbated by probable attitudes of religious superiority by the River Brethren?

I wish I had been there to note the degree to which strong personalities fed the differences leading to division. I assume that they were significant; probably at the bottom of most divisions lies a conflict of personalities.

I wish I had been there to observe what happened to social relationships. What effect did the separation have on families who had members in both groups? Were relationships as warm as before the break? Did Mennonites and River Brethren intermarry–as frequently as they would have done had the break not occurred? Was exchange work on their farms done as often, and with the same good will? Did former fellow members, now separated, support each other financially in cases of personal economic hardship?

I wish I had been in Jacob Engel's living room (the small house still stands) to observe the nature of early River Brethren worship. Beyond "testimony meetings" (telling of religious experiences), how did the pietism of the new group affect their previous worship patterns, including such corporate worship expressions as singing and prayer?

Few of these questions can be answered from Brethren in Christ sources, which are virtually nonexistent for that early period. As Carlton Wittlinger observes in *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, most of our knowledge of the early years of the Brethren in Christ is circumstantial. Our understanding of those years must be drawn from what is known about the group some 100 years after its founding. But were the sources available, they would be the basis for a valuable case study in the dynamics involved–both religious and sociological–in divisions and formations of new groups within the Anabaptist tradition.

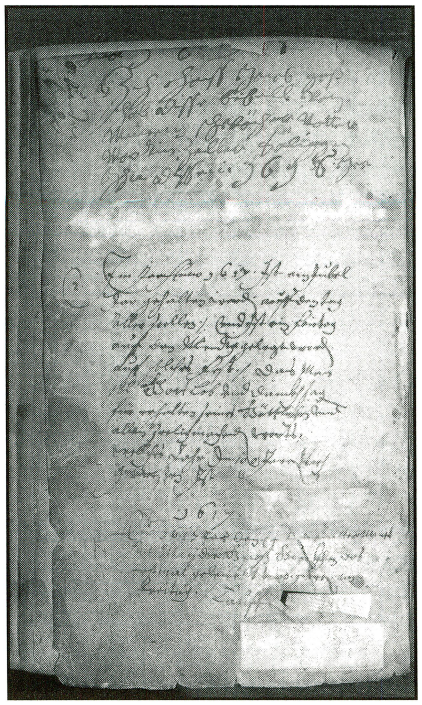
—E. Morris Sider has recently retired as Archivist for Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania, and the Brethren in Christ Church. He will be the Young Fellow at the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania.

1548 Froschauer German Bible

Text and photos by Dennis Stoesz

This Bible was printed in 1548 by Christoph Froschauer in Zurich, Switzerland. Bibles printed by Froschauer were popular because of the clear type, pictorial decoration and popular language. This particular Froschauer Bible is in quarto format and does not include illustrations. It does contain family records and quite a few handwritten notes by the Christner family and by others who owned it through the years.

Family tradition holds that this Bible was brought from Switzerland to the United States in 1769 by Veronica Shantz (1751-1833). Veronica married John H. Christner (born 1732) in 1773, whom she met in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Records of the births of their nine children, starting with Christian who was born in 1774, are found in the Bible. It is uncertain who all the owners of the Bible have been in subsequent generations. One family record indicates that the Bible was owned by Verda Brant Herboldheimer who was a granddaughter of Rena Christner. Another family story says the Bible was once thrown into a fire but was rescued by a young girl. From notes in the Bible itself, we know that Levi D. Christner (1897-1984) of Wolcottville, Indiana, purchased it in 1930 for ten dollars. In 1971, he donated the Bible and some personal papers to the Archives so they would be safeguarded and available to the broader community. This material was placed in a personal archives collection.



In spring 2000, Diane Christner, Newark, Delaware, and E. Wayne Christner, Boardman, Ohio, became interested in the existence of this Bible. E. Wayne Christner had done some research on the Christner family and on the Bible, but wanted to learn more. A decision was made at the archives to photograph parts of it in order to make it more accessible to the public and to encourage a fuller story to be written about it.

The eighty-seven photographs taken were placed in an album and are arranged as they were taken, beginning at the front. Special attention was paid to photographing title pages, and any pages that had handwritten notes on them. Some notes were dated as early as 1617. One note in 1698 indicates that Hanss Jacob Gass received this Bible from his father-in-law, Martin Zeller.

E. Wayne Christner was able to use these photographs to compile further documentation on the Christner family and on the Bible. Hopefully, people will continue to research the story of this Bible and the family names contained in it. It may also tell the broader story of the various Anabaptist, Amish, Mennonite and other Christian churches from the sixteenth century through to the present to which the owners of the Bible belonged.

The Archives recently transferred the 1548 Froschauer Bible, the set of related photographs, and *The Christners* by E. Wayne Christner (August 15, 2000) to the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, which houses selected family Bibles and genealogy books.

—Dennis Stoesz has served as archivist since 1989, and is a member of East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Managing Mennonite Memory: In Pursuit of a Congregational Records Schedule

(Sixth in a series)

by Gordon Oyer

One records retention schedule for over 250 separate organizations? Responses to a "customer service" survey have evolved into that very goal. The Central District Conference Historical Committee distributed the survey in mid-1999 to help identify needs of congregations we serve. Its results highlighted "guidance with record retention policies" as their greatest need, and we began to consider how we might meet it.

Dennis Stoesz, in his timely introduction of this *MHB* series, has aptly put forth systematic records retention and disposition as key to "Managing Mennonite Memory." The series has demonstrated that effective retention/disposition efforts are best guided by thoughtful parameters, usually expressed in the form of a records retention schedule. These schedules help creators and managers of records determine which documents to discard and which to retain in often-limited space. They work best when tailored to an organization's specific circumstances and backed by a central "authority" capable of assuring implementation.

East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Illinois, home congregation of the author.
Photo credit: Gordon Oyer

Our committee enjoys neither benefit. We obviously could not design schedules specific to each congregation, and we fill only a limited advisory role. Adding to the task's complexity, we decided to pursue it jointly with the other regional bodies (Ohio, Indiana-Michigan, Illinois conferences) that may soon constitute the Great Lakes Mennonite Conference, rather than issue a conference-specific schedule on the eve of planned merger. With the help of Stoesz, we are also testing the current draft among a few congregations. Now, our quest for better information and feedback turns to readers of *MHB*, as well. After reading this article and reviewing the schedule, please share your thoughts and concerns.

Personal Experiences

When I volunteered to draft a schedule for discussion by the Historical Committee, I anticipated drawing upon several eclectic experiences spanning the past fifteen years. During the mid-1980s, as a University of Illinois staff accountant, I coordinated our office's retention space, overhauled the campus accounting retention schedule (under university archivist and State Records Commission guidance), and attempted to monitor our compliance. I quickly learned that getting administrators to take records retention seriously is no small task, even when backed by state statute. They often receive retention initiatives as annoyances that interfere with their "real" work in the organization. Pressure to complete projects and meet goals can make it seem more effective to adopt "stash-and-purge" records management, followed with pleas of ignorance and/or mercy.

Starting in the late 1980s, research for history graduate studies and co-authorship of a congregational history taught me the value of centrally-retained, well-maintained records for historical inquiry. I also discovered how the quality of a sin-

East Bend Mennonite Church historians, Margaret Oyer (left) and Esther Sutter in front of one of two congregational historical cabinets.
Photo credit: Margaret Oyer

gle congregation's records can fluctuate dramatically depending on the inclinations of successive pastors.

Regarding church records, my parents' work as congregational historians exposed me to congregational record keeping at an early age. Later, stints on two conference historical committees (Illinois Mennonite Conference (MC), 1993-1996; Central District Conference (GC), 1998-present) added new perspectives on church records. Here, I helped organize a congregational records workshop and followed up with churches failing to centrally deposit records. Together, these experiences illuminated the diversity of record-keeping interest and practice across congregations.

Finally, though I have never worked as an archivist, I gained insight on the profession's theoretical framework from two 1999 archival courses at the University of Illinois.

Given these various experiences, one might conclude that when the opportunity arose to draft a retention schedule to accommodate so many different congregational and denominational interests, I should have known better than volunteer. Still, the emerging document can hopefully mature into a beneficial resource.

User Considerations

Several documents designed for congregational archivists and historians already exist. Although they have been available to congregations for some time, the survey responses suggested that an additional niche in records guidance needed filling. Consequently, I approached the schedule mainly with those who actually create and file active records in mind, i.e., ministers and secretaries, especially of smaller and understaffed congregations. Also, we anticipated the greatest incremental benefit by accommodating those congregations now disinclined toward retention practices, since those with a stronger interest would already have obtained guidance from existing resources.

At my job, I had encountered views of records retention as a hindrance rather than an aid. I currently perceived similar vibes from some target congregations who hinted that questions about retention practices at best addressed irrelevant busywork that benefits only "historians" or at worst reflected external interference.

Our challenge, then, was to communicate that basic retention practices benefit local congregations here and now—that it could reap programmatic, administrative, and legal (not just historical) benefits. We also needed to convey that the effort would not require enormous resources or impede pastors' pursuits of their congregational mission. In addition, while a schedule should not overwhelm with unrealistic expectations, neither should it imply a standard that would discourage congregations already employing excellent practices. Nor should it interfere with or contradict the efforts of regional archivists to encourage deposits in their repositories.

The ultimate success of the schedule, however, hinged on whether we could encourage otherwise disinterested congregations to simply save important records, regardless of where they retained them. Further, if the schedule had much hope of actual implementation by those least inclined, its length should not exceed a two-sided sheet of paper. In short, we sought content specific enough to be useful, yet broad enough to be widely adaptable.

Constructing the Schedule

I began to prepare the draft by consulting several existing guidelines. These included, among others, my file copy of a schedule for financial records (unattributed); *The Task of the Congregational Historian* (Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church: Goshen, 1994); *Heritage Preservation* by David Haury (Historical Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Churches: Topeka, 1996); "The Creation and Preservation of Church Records," by Melvin Gingerich and John F. Smith (typescript, n.p., n.d.); "Caring for Church Records," by Lawrence Klippenstein (typescript, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, n.d.). They provided a basic sense of what records were considered important and how long they were typically needed for administrative and legal purposes.

This process helped identify groupings of records: those documenting program details and decision making processes (reports and

Record Type		Copy 1—Congregational Use		Copy 2
		Current Administrative Use	Subsequent Disposition	Deposit in Denominational Archives*
Program Administration	Annual reports (Pastor, program, committees)	5 years	Retain	At least annually
	Congregational meeting minutes	5 years	Retain	At least annually
	Council/deacon/elder/committee minutes	5 years	Retain	At least annually
	Correspondence/files (Pastor, officer)	3 years	Retain	At least annually
	Ancillary program records (Youth, S.S., etc.)	3 years	Retain	At least annually
Publications	Bulletins w/inserts	2 years	Retain	At least annually
	Newsletters	2 years	Retain	At least annually
	Membership directories/yearbooks	Until replaced	Retain	As published
	Outreach pamphlets/brochures	Until replaced	Retain	As published
Financial	Treasurer's annual reports	5 years	Retain	At least annually
	Annual general ledgers	3 years	Retain	N/A
	Tax returns	7 years	Retain	N/A
	Bank statements	7 years	Destroy	N/A
	Canceled checks/deposit slips	7 years	Destroy	N/A
	Donation records	7 years	Denom. Archives	N/A
	Invoices/receipts	7 years	Destroy	N/A
	Payroll records	7 years	Destroy	N/A
Facility	Property deeds	As long as property is owned	Retain	N/A
	Architectural drawings	As long as property is owned	To new owner	N/A
Organizational	Incorporation documents	Until legally reorganized	Retain	N/A
	Constitution/bylaws	Until revised	Retain	As prepared
	Membership records	Until revised	Retain	N/A

***Depositing copies with a denominational archives** need not require significant administrative effort. One approach simply involves establishing a separate file to collect material, instructing committees and others who generate records to place an extra copy in the file whenever they generate documents, and mailing the contents to an archives monthly, quarterly, or annually, as your situation permits. Contact your conference historian or historical committee to determine which archives to use.

Comments on the retention schedule may be sent to Gordon Oyer at 110 Flora Dr., Champaign, IL 61821 or at goyer@uiuc.edu

minutes), publications that portray and disseminate congregational information (bulletins, newsletters, etc.), financial documentation (ledgers, statements, etc.), facility records that document ownership and structural design, and organizational records that address legal status. Groupings like these might offer additional guidance for retention of similar documents not specifically listed. Recommended retention periods often reflect subjective estimates as to how long a particular record might be regularly accessed by administrators.

Appropriate disposition of some records remains unclear, however. For example, should donation records be destroyed when no longer needed for legal documentation? Should they be retained and/or passed on to a regional archives? How do privacy concerns balance with historical value?

In the first draft, I tried to incorporate at least two concepts that were later abandoned. First, I sought to rely on archival language and concepts, discussing the life cycle of a document through active, semi-active, inactive, and disposition stages. Second, I recommended the ultimate "archiving" of a document either in the congregation *or* a repository.

Feedback from the joint Great Lakes committee indicated this approach was too confusing and unclear about exactly what we expected. Spelling out specific measures seemed preferable to permitting each congregation to derive its own definition of what "archiving" entailed for them. Further, it seemed that we could put limited text space to better use than explaining the theoretical life cycle of documents. Most users simply want to know when it is safe to throw something away.

The second and current draft, then, employs simpler language and explicitly recommends a "two-prong" approach to retention—keep one copy locally and, when appropriate, send a second copy to a regional archives (see schedule). It also encourages ongoing consultation and collaboration with regional archivists, a key relationship we hope all congregations will eventually embrace. This approach of offering generic guidance coupled with regional archival consultation hopefully provides encouragement without contradicting specific deposit practices that regional archivists develop. Toward this end, the document also supplies names and addresses of regional archivists (see box), and lists additional publications offering more detailed guidance.

The document also incorporates short narratives to address problematic areas such as audio-visual materials (in need of special storage

Electronic Records: Although retaining documents in electronic formats (such as e-mail, word processing, spreadsheet, and data base files) serve administrative purposes well and conserve storage space, these formats can deteriorate rapidly, and archival material may be quickly lost. At a minimum, back up your active electronic files weekly, and re-save inactive electronic documents every five years. Opinions vary as to how these records should be archived, so the safest measure is to consult the archivist of the regional Mennonite repository that holds your congregation's records to determine their practices, and periodically deposit your electronic records with them.

conditions), excessive memoranda (some of which can be weeded), and confidential material (saving and restricting is better than destroying).

Electronic Records

We also provide brief guidance for considering electronic records (see box). From an archival perspective, this area poses special challenges. Maintaining records electronically provides enormous benefits. Administratively, word processing and electronic spreadsheet capabilities substantially improve productivity and effectiveness. E-mail and web-based communication dramatically accelerate our interaction and decision making. For archives, these media can greatly expand access to documents that previously were limited to a select few with time and money to visit repositories. Without question, electronic media are here to stay as irreplaceable tools and documentary sources.

The archival profession remains cautious about the role of electronic processes for long-term preservation, however. Rapid changes in software and hardware can quickly render some forms of electronic records virtually inaccessible if they are not converted to new formats. Original electronic records can be altered—intentionally or otherwise—more easily than paper or microfilm. They also require special environments to minimize deterioration, which occurs at a rate faster than acid-free paper or microfilm. The dangers of fire and silverfish that plague traditional records are replaced by those of magnetic fields and hardware crashes. Only experimentation and passage of time can reveal the ultimate potential for electronic record preservation methods.

Archives themselves have varying capabilities for investing in and supporting access to the various electronic records now being generated by our congregations. One effort toward a solution within the world of Mennonite records involves collaboration between *mennonite.net* and the Archives of the Mennonite Church to provide web-based archiving and electronic records management guidance for congregations. Because of their diverse practices and complexities, we especially invite readers' feedback on the electronic records implications of our schedule.

In conclusion, I have found the effort to develop a congregational schedule educational and rewarding, though still incomplete. Its development continues this fall as the Great Lakes committees renew discussion of the schedule. Please join us in the process by sharing your perspectives.

—Gordon Oyer is an Assistant Director of Accounting for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and serves on the Central District Conference Historical Committee. Comments on the retention schedule may be sent to him at 110 Flora Drive, Champaign, IL 61821, or goyer@uiuc.edu.

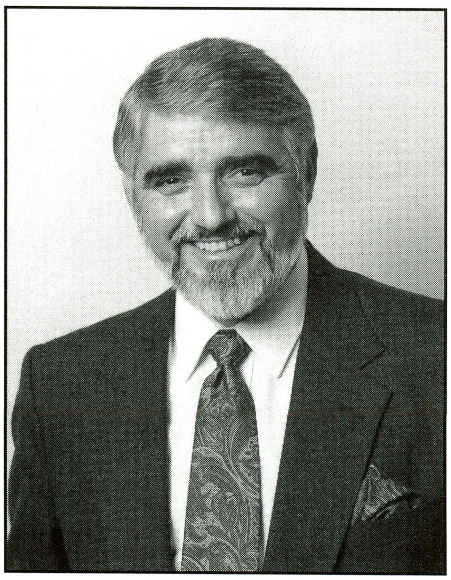
Archivists at Great Lakes Regional Mennonite Repositories

Steven Estes, Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center
PO Box 1007, Metamora, IL 61548
309/367-2551

Dennis Stoesz, Archives of the Mennonite Church
1700 S. Main, Goshen, IN 46526
219/535-7293; dennises@goshen.edu

Paul Weaver, Bluffton College Archives
280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817
419/358-3286; weaverp@bluffton.edu

Do You Have a Good Sense of Humor?



by Jep Hostetler

What does it mean when we say, he/she has a "good sense of humor"? It is an interesting question when one realizes that a sense of humor is one of the highest character attributes when seeking a prospective mate. The term "sense of humor" is most likely highly specific to the person making the statement. For example, if one was reared in a family where sarcasm was seen as humor, then by example sarcastic humor is seen as the norm. On the other hand, if practical jokes were a part of ones experience, then a person who enjoys, participates in, or is the brunt of harmless practical jokes (and is a good sport about it) can be seen as a person with a good sense of humor. Still others see a sense of humor as an attribute for those who laugh well, have an easy smile, and who are not afraid to participate in all out belly laughing. Then there are those who are actually skilled at telling a joke, with excellent timing, they remember the punch line, and they can deliver it with the surprise ending that is needed. Puns, oxymorons and riddles are also a part of the picture. They are often called "groaners" and they are cherished in some families much more than others. A person of wit can also be seen as a person with a sense of humor. Even a person, who enjoys clowning, or clowning around, is seen as a person with the attribute. The list of styles of sense of humor can be quite extensive, but it would not be complete without the ubiquitous "dry sense of humor." This "dry" sense of humor is family-defined, culturally bound, and definitely in the eye of the beholder.

When I ask people whether they have a sense of humor, the answers are tied to what they perceive this to mean. In other words, they relate to a specific type of sense of humor. They see themselves as having any of the attributes that relate to:

Enjoying sarcastic humor
Participating in harmless practical jokes
Laughing easily
Being able to tell a joke
Welcoming puns, oxymorons, riddles
Having wit
Clowning
Having a dry sense of humor

Is it possible that the person with a "good" sense of humor is capable of enjoying, participating in, and welcoming all of the styles of humor? The reason this is mentioned is that we often say someone has a good sense of humor as just a sense of humor. This seems to indicate that some folks have a sense of humor while others have a good sense of humor. It indicates that there are different levels to this marvelous character trait.

If people have a good sense of humor, are they seen as frivolous, inane, or silly? This is clearly suggested when one attempts to bring either a sense of humor or humor into the worship setting. It is all right to have humor on a Sunday evening, or at the weekend retreat, or for the young people, but certainly do not bring a clown into the worship service. Worship is too important and serious to involve this kind of silliness.

Why not look at the list above and answer the question, "Do I have a sense of humor?" If you were to defend your position, what would you have to say about your own understanding of this characteristic? What was your family like? Where did you learn about humor? What shape has your sense of humor taken?

—Jep Hostetler, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, is a humor consultant and author. He is an associate professor emeritus at the Ohio State University College of Medicine. He and his wife Joyce serve as the staff persons for the Mennonite Medical Association.

Book Reviews

by Kathryn Aschliman

Henner's Lydia by Marguerite de Angeli, Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998, 72 pages. Price: $14.99 U.S.; $21.50 Canada

Skippack School by Marguerite de Angeli, Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999, 88 pages. Price: $14.99 U.S.; $22.29 Canada

Thee, Hannah! by Marguerite de Angeli, Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2000, 99 pages. Price: $15.99 U.S.; $23.79 Canada

Herald Press had the good fortune to obtain publication rights for four of Marguerite de Angeli's picture books portraying either Amish, Mennonite or Quaker children living in Pennsylvania. (See the earlier review of *Yonie Wondernose*, Aschliman.) Harry, Marguerite de Angeli's second youngest son now living in a retirement community in New Jersey, applauds the quality of the Herald Press printing and awarded the publisher the original printer's negatives. (Schrock) These de Angeli books, first published in 1936, 1939 and 1940, have special historical significance for the current Anabaptist generations.

Problems arise in each of the books out of the main character's efforts to grow up. Henner's Lydia's goal of taking her hooked mat to market was challenged by her distractibility to finish it. Eli's lack of interest in the Skippack School activities was turned around through redemptive action. Hannah scorned the stiff Quaker bonnet that was hers to wear until she discovered its meaning.

Each of these books is saturated with moral teaching without being preachy. Lydia is found asleep kneeling at her bedside at book's end. Quotes from the beloved schoolmaster Christopher Dock that resounded in Eli's ears were often Bible verses. The family helped Hannah identify her encounters with Old Spotty, Grammy Welsh's name for Satan.

The books incorporate the way in which justice issues of the day were passed on to the children. Although Lydia could not sell her hooked mat at the Lancaster market, Pop did take her along to the city and gave her twenty-five cents with which to buy Mom a present. Pop convinced Eli that the Indians of Pennsylvania were friendly. William Penn's treaty with the Lenape tribe was still in effect. "Food and kindness to them means a great deal," Pop said. Eli acted upon that teaching when White Eagle stopped by during the absence of the Shrawder parents. Prior to the Civil War, Hannah knew her father and other Friends helped slaves escape to the north. When she met a runaway slave and her ill son, Hannah responded compassionately despite the risk involved.

These stories of minority children were interlaced with contacts with the general stream of society. From her school lunch, Lydia (Amish) traded her homemade snitz pie for Miriam's boughten orange. Master Christopher Dock introduced Eli (Mennonite) to the printer Master Christopher Sauer after visiting Rittenhouse's paper mill. Cecily, Hannah's (Quaker) next door neighbor and best friend, attended Saint Peter's church where "other fashionable people went." With a sympathetic touch, de Angeli preserved the integrity of the contrasting life styles.

de Angeli portrayed the importance of family relationships in her stories as the characters shared the tasks of daily living (Hannah did the best job of ironing Father's fine linen stocks), as adults reprimanded gently (Hannah's allowance was to pay for Cecily's sash which she had ruined), as children undertook the making of gifts for their mothers (Eli's bench like the one they left in Germany), as parents entrusted their children with major responsibilities (Eli was left in charge of little sister Sibby and the animals when Mom was called away to help a sick neighbor while Pop had gone to market), as excursions to the city were arranged for the children (Lydia went to Lancaster with Pop), and as contacts were made with the extended family (Lydia and Hannah's live-in grannies, Eli's visit with cousin Hannah in German Town).

These three books exemplify de Angeli's son Maury's perception of her development as an author/illustrator: "We (her family) have watched her grow literarily since the publication of the first Ted and Nina book, increasing her fluency and magnifying her style with each new book, as the scope of each story was greater than that of the last." (Miller & Fields, p. 340)

Harry de Angeli summarizes his mother's work: "Each of her books reflects the warmth that has earned her a special place in the hearts of generations of young readers." (*Yonie Wondernose*, About the Author) How fortunate that these stories can again find their place in the hearts of this and future generations.

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—Kathryn Aschliman, Goshen, Indiana, has taught early childhood education at Goshen College and directed the Laboratory Kindergarten program. She is now enjoying retirement.

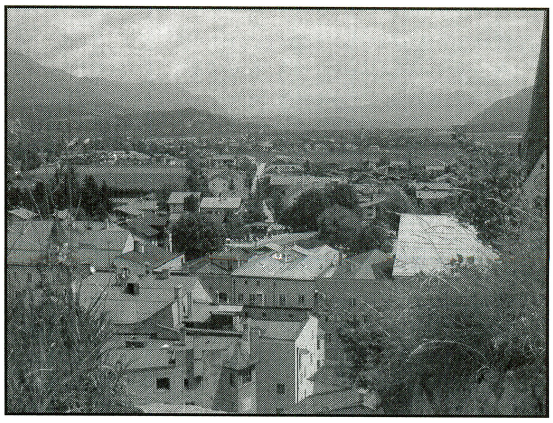
The Back Page

It was John Paul, TourMagination coach driver, who initiated the conversation. When I emerged from the tour of the Schwazer Silberbergwerk, the silver mine at Schwaz, Austria, John Paul said I must go with him. I followed him to the administrative offices and was introduced to Sarlay Alexander, managing director. Did I know anything about Jacob Hutter, who had worked as an engineer in the mines? The Jacob Hutter I knew about was hardly an engineer; he was a hat maker, who was publicly executed at Innsbruck—fifty miles away—in 1536.

Anabaptist Pilgram Marpeck, on the other hand, was an engineer—and mining official. In fact, as an imperial mining magistrate for the district, he had jurisdiction over this very mine. Marpeck served from 1525 to 1528, when he resigned, apparently because he was ordered to help police religious deviants—like the Anabaptists. He, himself, had received rebaptism.

Marpeck became a prolific writer. He was one of the few Anabaptist leaders who died a natural death—in Augsburg, 1556.

Wouldn't it be something if visitors to the silver mine at Schwaz could also learn about Pilgram Marpeck? —jes



Rattenberg, Austria, the home of Pilgram Marpeck
Photo credit: John E. Sharp

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Mennonite Historical Bulletin
Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church
1700 South Main Street
Goshen, IN 46526
Telephone: (219) 535-7477
Fax: (219) 535-7756
E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu
Web Site www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/
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